SERIALS DIVISION

Jordan Times

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جوردان تايمز يومية [illegible] انجليزية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية «الرأي»

Egypt wants grounding of Sudan Airways

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt and other non-aligned countries will on Monday urge the U.N. Security Council to pass a resolution suspending all international flights by Sudan airways, an Egyptian official said here Friday. "The group of non-aligned countries in the Security Council, of which Egypt is a member, is in the process of drawing up a draft resolution which will be submitted Monday to international authority and which will notably stipulate an embargo on external flights by the Sudanese Air company," the official said. "Sudan has not yet conformed to the demands of the Security Council stipulated in resolutions 1044 and 1054," the official added. The two resolutions call for the extradition to Ethiopia of three men implicated in the failed assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995.

Woman linked to London blasts freed

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli-Arab woman held for nine days on suspicion of involvement in two 1994 bombings against Jewish targets in London was released, Israel's army radio said. Police released Huda Fudeh, a 30-year-old Israeli-Arab from Acre, after finding no evidence against her, the radio said. "They said to me the reason for the arrest was contact with a foreign agent. I truly didn't understand what it was about at all," Ms. Fudeh told army radio. Ms. Fudeh said she was angry the investigation was stretched out over nine days and said it could have been completed in a day. Ms. Fudeh, whose name was not published until her release on Thursday, was arrested nine days ago upon arrival in Israel from Europe. She was interrogated by Israel's Shin Bet secret service. Israeli security sources had said she was being held in connection with two London bombings in July 1994.

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One killed as protesters storm Tulkarem jail

TULKAREM, West Bank (AP) — Yasser Arafat's security forces on Friday opened fire on hundreds of Palestinian protesters who stormed a West Bank jail, police and witnesses said. One man was killed and several wounded in melee.

Mr. Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA) said several inmates, members of Islamic militant groups, escaped. The statement claimed the fatal shots were fired by gunmen from the Islamic militant group Hamas.

Palestinian police clamped a curfew on the town of 40,000 and called in reinforcements from neighbouring cities to contain the rioting, one of the most serious challenges to Mr. Arafat's rule since the start of Palestinian autonomy two years ago.

The violence came a day after day-long protests against the Palestinian authority in the neighbouring town of Nablus that were sparked by the death of a detainee who had been severely beaten by Palestinian security forces.

Friday's violence began when about 400 protesters, many of them relatives of the jailed Islamic militants, rallied outside the Tulkarem jail and threw stones at police, said Akram Abu Raja, in charge of security at the lock-up.

Police opened fire, killing one man and wounding several others, said Mr. Abu Raja.

Witnesses said the courtyard of the compound was littered with rocks, and that two cars had been burned.

The crowd had assembled outside the jail after rumours circulated in town that inmates were being mistreated by the security forces.

Many of the inmates, rounded up during a spring crackdown following a series of suicide bombings in Israel, were on a hunger strike to press for their release.

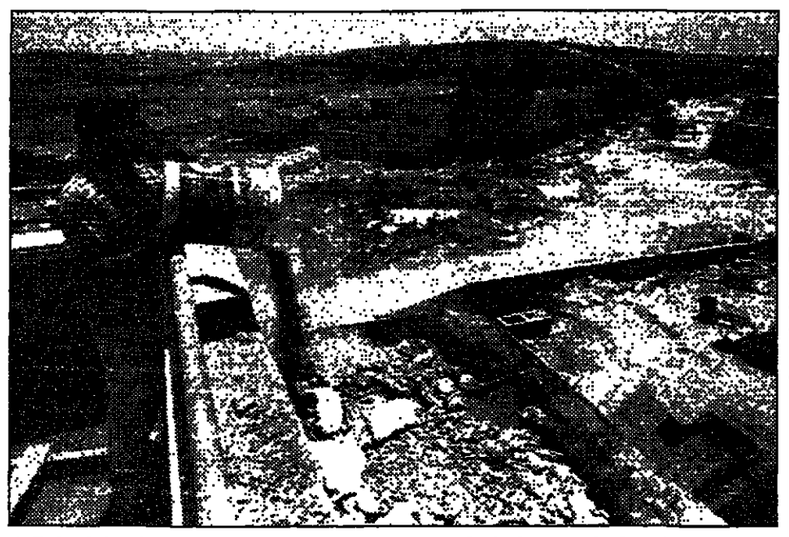
A Palestinian authority statement claimed that armed Hamas members mingled with the protesters and opened fire during the storming of the compound, thus killing the protester.

The number of wounded was not immediately known. One Palestinian official said three people were in serious condition from gunshots. However, Tulkarem hospital treated only nine people who were lightly hurt, including one with a bullet in the foot.

A doctor at a Red Crescent clinic in town said he treated six people, including four who were hit by gunfire and one escapee from jail who had been weakened by the hunger strike.

The Israeli army, which still controls access roads in and out of the city, sealed the area. The army said it deployed more troops outside Tulkarem, and allowed

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A Palestinian labourer at work in an apartment block that overlooks a building site at Givat Zeev Jewish settlement with a view of the West Bank (Reuters photo)

Israel lifts restrictions on expanding settlements

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's new rightwing government on Friday lifted some of the restrictions on expanding Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, effectively reversing a partial freeze imposed four years ago.

"The government has decided not to maintain restrictions on the natural development of settlements which were imposed by the former government," Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh said after the cabinet's weekly meeting.

Removing some of the obstacles prohibiting the growth of the existing settlements could pave the way for a relaunch of the Jewish state's settlement programme, put on ice by the previous Labour-led government in 1992.

The Israeli embassy in Amman said in a statement Friday evening that "the resolution of the government did not include an operational decision on the establishment of settlements. The import of this resolution is a change of procedure. Instead of referring the subject to the committees established by the former government, any decision on this subject will have to be approved in the future by three authorities: the minister of defence, who will consider security requirements; the ministry of finance which will consider compatibility with the current budget; and the prime minister whose directives are essential for the decision."

The embassy statement said no resolution was adopted on the construction of new roads.

However, the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu steered clear of announcing any new construction project amid clear warnings from the Palestinians and the United States that the settlements pose a major hurdle to the faltering peace process.

From now on new development projects for existing settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be spared a labyrinth of red tape and will be submitted directly to Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai.

"This does not mean that we have approved the slightest new construction. But we have decided to end the discrimination suffered by the Jewish population concerning natural growth," Mr. Naveh said.

He insisted that as in the past any plans to create a new settlement will need a special government decision. However, the rules and procedures for expanding existing settlements will be simpler than in the past.

Government spokesman Moshe Vogel said "the building policy in the territories is under the control of the government ultimately.

"What we are doing is eliminating what we find is discriminatory and bureaucratic red tape," he added.

The move is sure to anger Palestinians living in nearby autonomous areas and could set back efforts to revive the stalled Middle East peace process.

Mr. Netanyahu, who is due to meet with King Hussein on Monday, has said he would allow the expansion of existing settlements and the building of by-pass roads around Palestinian areas, but not the construction of new settlements.

He has also brought into his cabinet such champions of the settlers' cause as Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon.

A Jewish settler leader, Pinhas Wallerstein, praised the government's decision, but said he was disappointed that further measures were not adopted to promote expansion of the settlements.

King to visit Syria today

AMMAN (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein will visit Syria today for the first time in two years to bolster relations between the two Arab countries and to discuss the Middle East peace process with President Hafez Assad.

Relations between Jordan and Syria began improving at the end of June when the King met President Assad on the sidelines of the Arab summit in Cairo.

It was their first meeting since Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in October 1994, which angered the Syrians who demand a common Arab front in negotiations.

Jordan accused Syria in early June of closing its eyes to "attempted terrorist attacks in Jordan, financed by radical Palestinian organisations based in Damascus." A senior Jordanian official announced on Thursday that Syria had taken "positive steps" in addressing these concerns by arresting about 10 people suspected of plotting attacks in Jordan.

The arrests were made after Jordanian security officials provided the names to Syrian authorities, the official told AFP, requesting anonymity.

During the Arab summit, King Hussein gave Mr. Assad a complete dossier on 36 foiled attempts organised from Syrian territory against Jordan by groups hostile to the Israel-Arab peace process.

Mr. Assad told the King that he was not aware of these plots, the senior official said, adding, however, that since the Cairo meeting, "there have not been any attempts at infiltrating Jordanian territory from Syria."

King Hussein will hold extensive talks with Mr. Assad on "matters of security in general and the situation of dozens of Jordanian political prisoners, some of whom have been serving sentences for more than 20 years," the official added. "Mr. Abdul Moti Mueilik, head of the secret Islamic army, as well as officials of the Islamic Jihad and dissident organisations of the PLO's Fateh faction are imprisoned in Syria," the official said.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti recently held talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa in Cairo.

Mr. Sharaa expressed Syria's desire to improve relations with Jordan and reaffirmed that Damascus was engaged in the peace process.

The future of the peace process after the right-wing election victory in Israel on May 29 will also be discussed by the two leaders, the senior official said.

King Hussein is to reaffirm Jordan's support for Syrian positions in peace negotiations with Israel, including a return of the strategic Golan Heights, which Israel occupied in 1967 Middle East war.

An Israeli newspaper reported Thursday that a high-ranking Syrian envoy met Mr. Netanyahu secretly in Israel to examine the prospects of a "Lebanese-first" peace deal.

The Haaretz daily said the talks took place in early July before Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu visited Washington, according to the respected military expert Zeev Schiff.

Under Mr. Netanyahu's Lebanon-first option, Israel and Syria would break the six-month deadlock in their peace negotiations by agreeing on a settlement in Lebanon where both countries have troops.

Syria has publicly refused such an approach and again called on Thursday for the return of Arab land, including the Golan Heights.

Mr. Netanyahu is expected to raise the Lebanon-first deal when he meets with King Hussein on Monday on his first visit to Jordan since becoming prime minister, the Jordanian official said.

Reports from Tel Aviv Friday said Mr. Netanyahu asked King Hussein to mediate in peace talks with Syria when the two leaders met in London last week.

Mr. Netanyahu raised his "Lebanon-first" option with the King, the reports said.

King Hussein told Mr. Netanyahu that Syria reached on an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan opposed such a plan, insisting first that an accord be Heights, according to Israeli media reports. Syria on Friday said it would not agree to the proposal

Israeli army radio said late Thursday that Mr. Netanyahu

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Mahdi declares ceasefire following Aideed death

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somali warlord Ali Mahdi Mohammad, the main rival of the late Mohammad Farah Aideed, declared an immediate unilateral ceasefire on Friday, a radio station controlled by the former said.

Mr. Ali Mahdi, whose forces control the northern part of Mogadishu, said he was ready to improve dialogue with General Aideed's successors, according to the radio's 7:00 p.m. (1600 GMT) broadcast.

Gen. Aideed died overnight of injuries sustained in fighting last week and was buried on Friday near his home in the west of the capital, the radio station said.

The radio said that Gen. Aideed died of a heart attack around 10:00 p.m. (1900 GMT) and that he would be buried Friday.

It announced 30 days of mourning starting from Friday, with flags to be flown at half mast.

Reliable sources said Gen. Aideed's heart attack was the result of gunshot wounds he suffered last week during fighting in the Medina district of south Mogadishu.

The radio said that Isse Mohammed Siad, a minister in the self-proclaimed government which Gen. Aideed formed in June last year, would take over in the interim as leader of the United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance.

The radio station of Gen. Aideed's rival, Ali Mahdi Mohammad, reported on July 26 that the general had been seriously wounded during fighting in the Medina district three days earlier.

It said he had been hit in the intestines and that his life was in danger.

At the time, a senior aide to Gen. Aideed rapidly denied the report, claiming that the general was in "excellent health" and last Sunday Gen. Aideed himself issued a personal denial during an interview on his faction's radio.

Speaking on the occasion of ceremonies marking the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad, Gen. Aideed declared:

"Wishes from the enemy cannot kill or wound me. I will die when my time runs out and when Allah wishes."

The shattered capital, scene of fierce fighting over the past few weeks, was quiet Friday. Gen. Aideed was buried in Huriwa, a western suburb of Mogadishu.

Some six million people in the Horn of Africa, has been ruled by feuding warlords since the overthrow of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991.

Mogadishu is divided by a "green line" with the north of the city controlled by Mr. Ali Mahdi who also controls Medina and part of the enclave of Bermuda in south Mogadishu.

U.S. puts more pressure on Iran

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States moved to turn up the heat on Iran amid a report Friday based on U.S. intelligence leaks linking Tehran to the bombing of a U.S. military complex in Saudi Arabia.

USA Today said U.S. officials believe the bombers of the Khobar towers in Dhahran were probably trained at a network of 11 terrorist training camps that Iran maintains within its borders.

The White House believes the organization of Islamic Revolution and the Hizbollah of Hejaz had bomb training at the Imam Ali camp in east Tehran, the largest of the sites, the newspaper said.

Administration spokesmen had no comment on the report, but the leaks coincided with a renewed U.S. effort to isolate Iran and other so-called "rogue" nation diplomatically.

President Bill Clinton planned to sign a bill Monday that would slap sanctions on foreign firms that invest more than $40 million in Iran and Libya's oil industries.

The legislation is staunchly opposed by European countries which argue that sanctions are simplistic and ineffectual, and which prefer a "critical dialogue" with Iran's Islamic regime.

On the domestic front, the administration is pushing for passage of an anti-terrorism bill that would require explosives to be marked with identifying tags, and expand the power of authorities to conduct telephone wiretaps.

The mid-air explosion last month of TWA flight 800, which investigtors suspect but have not proved was caused by sabotage, and the June 25 Dhahran bombing have prompted a dramatic reassessment here of the terrorist threat.

"The American people have been exposed to an increasing war against them with respect to terrorism," said Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director William Freeh at a Senate hearing Thursday.

"The United States and its interests, both here and around the world, are clearly under attack," he said. "We may be in for a very difficult time."

USA Today cited classified U.S. intelligence documents which said that as many as 5,000 men and women were being trained at the Iranian camps, where they were being taught to assemble bombs and carry out assassinations.

About 500 of the trainees were being taught specialised skills such as suicide bombings, the documents said.

The terrorist acts were all approved by Iran's supreme council, which is headed by President Hashemi Rafsanjani, according to the documents.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry told the Senate Armed Services Committee last month that the United States should retaliate if a state was found to have been behind the Dhahran bombing.

U.S. officials have not publicly pointed the finger at any country, but they have said the military grade explosives and detonating devices used in the bombing, which killed 19 Americans, indicated it was the work of a sophisticated international terrorist organisation.

In Tehran, President Rafsanjani called on oil-producing Muslim countries on Friday to stop shipping crude to the United States as Washington readies to sign an anti-Iranian bill into law.

Mr. Rafsanjani told weekly Muslim prayers at Tehran University that Muslims could use oil as a "political tool" to press for their own demands.

Bishop of Oran assassinated:

France determined to keep Algeria ties despite killing

PARIS (AFP) — France pledged Friday to stick to its Algeria policy despite the murder of the Roman Catholic bishop of Oran by Islamic extremists opposed to developing relations between Paris and its former colony.

Pierre Claverie, an outspoken critic of fundamentalist violence, was killed by a remote-controlled bomb at his palace in the western Algerian city late on Thursday.

It was seen as a bloody riposte to a visit by French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette, the first official trip by a French minister to Algeria for three years.

Mr. de Charette, speaking Friday a day after returning to Paris, vowed "France will not be deterred from its path" of friendly relations with Algiers by the "ignoble act against a man of faith, of justice and of courage."

"France wants calm, friendly relations with Algeria," he said. "It takes up the message of Bishop Claverie, a message of friendship and solidarity between the French and Algerian people."

French Prime Minister Alain Juppe said the murder "can only strengthen the determination of all those who reject violence and hatred and who desire that peace and harmony will prevail." The Islamic extremists accuse France of supporting the Algerian government and President Liamine Zeroual, allowing it to remain in power with "political, economic and military" aid.

To the fundamentalists, Mr. de Charette's two-day official visit, during which he met Mr. Zeroual, merely confirmed their suspicions.

The bomb was an explosive charge on a gas canister set off by remote control as Rev-erend Claverie's car entered the palace courtyard, informed sources said in Paris. His driver was also killed.

Rev. Claverie, 58, one of Algeria's most prominent churchmen, was noted for his frankness and hostility to the Islamic fundamentalists who have been fighting to overthrow the government since it annulled elections in January 1992.

More than 40,000 people, mainly civilians, have died in the conflict since then. Rev. Claverie's death brought the toll of Christian religious figures killed in the past three years to 19. The death of Rev. Claverie, a fourth-generation settler born in Algeria when it was still a French colony, came just hours after he had met Mr. de Charette. In a prophetic twist, he had predicted the visit could spark renewed violence.

No MENA summit without peace progress — Mubarak

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak warned Israel on Friday that there would be no Middle East economic summit in Cairo later this year unless progress was made in the peace process.

"We have to see progress on the Palestinian track of the peace process before the economic summit in Cairo in November to encourage the participants," Mr. Mubarak said in a television interview here.

"If there is no progress, economic cooperation (with Israel) will hurt us," Mr. Mubarak said, underlining that Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu was "perfectly aware of this."

The annual economic summit was first held in Casablanca in 1994 and brought together Arab and Israeli business leaders and officials, along with representatives from outside the region, to foster development in the Middle East.

"I told the Americans that if there was no progress in the peace process before the summit in November, it would have negative repercussions on the summit," Mr. Mubarak told editors of Egyptian newspapers who accompanied him to Washington.

The Egyptian president returned home Friday after a four-day official visit to the United States which included talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton on the future of the peace process.

Mr. Mubarak also called for a new international summit on terrorism like the one held in Sharm Al Sheikh, Egypt, in March after the deadly wave of Islamic suicide bombings in Israel.

"All the nations of the world have to show maximum interest in the issue of terrorism and should hold a conference on the problem," Mr. Mubarak said in the televised interview.

Israel pressures Arafat to close deputy's East Jerusalem office

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Israeli government on Friday increased pressure on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to close the Jerusalem office of a Palestinian legislator, officials said.

"The opening of this office constitutes a flagrant violation of the commitments made by the Palestinian authority to stop all activity in Jerusalem," the secretary general of the Israel government, Danny Naveh, said on Israeli Radio.

"This affair is a test for us, Mr. Arafat has to respect his commitments and have this office closed," Mr. Naveh added.

Hatem Abdul Kader, a member of the elected Palestinian legislative council, opened the office Thursday in Beit Hanina in Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem, within the city limits set by the Jewish state.

He said the office would investigate complaints by the approximately 160,000 Palestinians living in East Jerusalem.

Israeli police surrounded the building and checked all trying to enter it as the government warned that if the office remained open it would apply to the courts to shut it down.

"The government has called on the Palestinian authority to close the office by Friday," a statement from Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's office said late Thursday.

The right-wing mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, said the office was "provocation" and promised it would soon be closed, citing the example of offices closed last week at Orient House, the unofficial Palestinian headquarters in East Jerusalem.

Israel has banned the Palestinian authority from any political activities in East Jerusalem, which it captured and annexed in 1967. Israel considers the whole city its undivided and eternal capital, but the Palestinians also lay claim to the eastern sector as the capital of a future state.

Israeli troops said to assault PLO policeman

In another development, Israeli soldiers assaulted a Palestinian police commander and two companions in the still-occupied West Bank town of Hebron on Thursday, the officer said.

Colonel Tareq Zaid said Israeli soldiers assaulted him when he overtook their military jeep while travelling from Hebron to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-ruled town of Dhahriyeh.

"One soldier tried to hit me and my son jumped to defend me. They beat my son and my driver in front of my eyes and detained them," Col. Zaid told Reuters.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said an Israeli patrol stopped Col. Zaid's car which they thought "suspicious." She said the driver refused a request to identify himself. Col. Zaid's son then arrived in a separate car and the two "went wild" and "entered a physical confrontation with the soldiers" who arrested them.

Col. Zaid said the soldiers scoffed when he showed them his Israeli government-issued VIP card and smashed the windscreen of the car of two Palestinian lawyers who stopped to inquire about the incident while passing by.

Hebron, one of six West Bank cities Israel agreed to hand over to Palestinian self-rule under a deal signed in 1995, remains under Israeli control.

Israel was to have pulled out its troops from most of the city in March. But the redeployment was delayed by a spate of Islamic militant suicide bombings in February and March and a right-wing victory in Israeli elections in May.

Earlier in the day Israeli soldiers assaulted a Palestinian police patrol in the village of Nuba and beat a policeman wounding him in the hand, Col. Zaid said. He said a formal complaint would be filed with the Israeli authorities. He also called for a general strike in Hebron on Saturday to protest at Israeli army practices.

Somalia's Aideed humbled U.S., U.N.

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed, who died overnight, humbled U.S. and U.N. troops in Somalia and evaded an all-out manhunt after his militiamen killed 24 Pakistani peacekeepers in 1993.

Believed to be 62, General Aideed was born near Belet Huen, in the west of Somalia near the border with Ethiopia. He had three wives and 14 children.

Educated abroad, he became a captain in the Somali army when the Horn of Africa nation won independence from Italy and Britain in 1960.

Mohammad Siad Barre, who became president in 1969, jailed Gen. Aideed for several years, but then appointed him his security chief.

In 1984, Siad Barre removed Gen. Aideed from the centre of power by posting him to New Delhi as ambassador.

On his return, he became president of the United Somali Congress which joined other factions opposed to Siad Barre in a bloody civil war which ousted the dictator in January 1991.

Gen. Aideed's militiamen then began fighting those of warlord Ali Mahdi Mohammad, who had become "interim president" of Somalia after Siad Barre was ousted.

Fierce fighting in the capital resulted in Ali Mahdi controlling the north of the city and Gen. Aideed most of the south, with a "green line" dividing them.



Mohammad Farah Aideed

In 1992 the international community sent troops to Somalia for Operation Restore Hope in a bid to stop militiamen of various factions looting food being sent to victims of a terrible drought.

Gen. Aideed criticised that operation as neo-colonialist and attacked the foreign soldiers.

His militiamen killed 24 Pakistani U.N. troops in 1993 and the United Nations put a price on his head and launched a manhunt for him.

Later that year his militiamen killed 18 U.S. soldiers. Photographs of their bodies being dragged through the streets horrified the world.

The United States eventually renounced the manhunt in favour of a search for a political solution, but it never came. U.S. troops pulled out in March 1994 and the peacekeepers withdrew a year later.

The country then was still a patchwork of fiefdoms ruled by major and minor clan warlords.

Alliances switch often as the militiamen fight with "technicals" — pick-up trucks with heavy machineguns or anti-aircraft guns mounted on board.

Gen. Aideed won a major victory in September last year by capturing the town of Baidoa, northwest of Mogadishu and the main town in the fertile Juba Valley, but local clansmen have continued attacks there, pinning his forces down, with the result that they are spread thin.

Gen. Aideed's supporters elected him "president" of Somalia in June last year and he appointed a "government," but it remained unrecognised.

Gen. Aideed's financier, Osman Hassan Ali "Atto", deserted him last year and joined forces with Ali Mahdi, who also controlled the Medina enclave in south Mogadishu and part of the Bermuda enclave.

Fighting around those two enclaves has been fierce in recent weeks.

Reliable sources say Aideed was wounded in fighting around Medina before dying of a heart attack at his home thursday night.

Greek tourists detained in north Cyprus

NICOSIA (R) — Two Greek tourists were detained by Turkish forces in Cyprus on Thursday after their speedboat ran out of petrol and they drifted to seas in the Turkish-held areas of the island, Greek Cypriot police said.

The two, identified as Athanassios Tsilikas, 48, and Demetrios Spyrou, 35, were detained in the northern coastal area of Kokkina, a police spokesman told Reuters.

"The United Nations have confirmed they were detained and taken by helicopter to the occupied parts of Nicosia," the spokesman said.

Tsilikas and Spyrou, who live in Paris, had rented a speedboat from the western coastal resort of Paphos.

"It looks like their speedboat ran out of petrol in Kokkina and they were arrested," the police spokesman said.

The owner of the speedboat raised the alarm when the two failed to return the boat at the designated time, he added.

Amnesty pushes Yemen to combat human rights violations

DUBAI (AFP) — Amnesty International slammed Yemen for "serious human rights abuses" in a report obtained by AFP here Friday, saying there was a "huge gap" between government pledges to respect rights and reality.

The report by Amnesty Deputy Secretary General Derek Evans said it deplored the "huge gap between the Yemen government's commitment to uphold international human rights and the reality on the ground."

The report was issued after a July 1-7 visit to Yemen, in which an Amnesty delegation pushed Sanaa to guarantee that human rights would be respected.

The Amnesty team told the authorities they were "concerned by the impunity enjoyed by members of the political security office and other members of the police forces who still carry out arbitrary arrests, threaten and harass political opponents, journalists, lawyers and human rights activists," the report said.

Human rights violations in Yemen also include torture, disappearances, flogging, amputation and capital punishment, Amnesty said.

The group also deplored the slow judicial procedures, the lack of investigation into cases of human rights abuses and unfair political trials.

The team said it met political and judicial authorities, leaders of parties and human rights organisations, lawyers, judges and women's representatives.

They added that Prime Minister Abdul Aziz Abdel Ghani, Interior Minister Hussein Mohammad Arab and Foreign Affairs Minister Abdel Karim Ali Al Iryani had pledged to cooperate with Amnesty to end the abuses.

At the beginning of June, Amnesty sent a memorandum to the Yemeni authorities detailing hundreds of cases of political prisoners arbitrarily arrested or detained, of unfair trials, torture, disappearances, use of the death penalty and extra-judicial killings.

The group sent a team to Yemen to verify information it received over the past few months.

Chirac discusses peace, arms with UAE leader

PARIS (R) — French President Jacques Chirac discussed Middle East peace and arms and business contracts with United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan Thursday.

Mr. Chirac's spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said the talks, at Sheikh Zayed's villa in the French Alpine town of Annemasse near the Swiss border, allowed the two countries to strengthen their political and strategic partnership.

She said the two leaders discussed prospects for civilian and defence deals but gave no details.

The UAE, tied to Paris by a defence pact, is a major French arms client. France has been vying with the United States for a long-awaited Emirates order for 80 warplanes potentially worth $6 billion.

U.S. makers Lockheed Martin Corp and McDonnell Douglas Corp are competing fiercely with their F-16 and F-15 aircraft respectively, while France is offering its Dassault Aviation Rafale, a fighter not yet in service with the French air force.

Industry sources say both Washington and Paris have offered to equip the planes with the latest hardware to clinch the deal, which would secure jobs at home beyond the year 2000 at a time of shrinking Western defence budgets.

France has already supplied the UAE with Mirage planes and AMX tanks. The UAE ordered French Leclerc battle tanks for $3.62 billion in 1993, in preference to British and American rivals, and awarded a $235 million deal to the Franco-German Eurocopter company in 1995 for new helicopters and upgrades.

Ms. Colonna said there were good prospects for deals in civilian aircraft, water desalination, telecommunications and in the oil, gas and petrochemical industry.

Mr. Chirac had been due to visit the UAE when he travelled to Saudi Arabia and Qatar in early July, but Sheikh Zayed had left for a summer holiday in Switzerland and UAE sources said the two men agreed to hold a private meeting in Europe instead.

Six years on Iraq says it was right to invade Kuwait

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq on Friday justified its invasion of Kuwait six years ago as a legitimate defence aimed at thwarting a Western plot led by the United States and Israel against the Iraqi people.

"The rapid Iraqi deployment on August 2, 1990 was a legitimate right for Iraq which was defending itself and protecting its people and its (territorial) integrity," the daily Al-Iraq wrote on the sixth anniversary of the invasion.

"Iraq wanted to defend the interests of the Arab Nation whose fate had been placed by certain Arab leaders in the hands of their masters, the United States, Britain and the Zionist entity," it added.

The decision to invade its tiny neighbour was "the appropriate response to a plot woven in the basements of the Pentagon and the CIA," the Central Intelligence Agency, the daily close to the government wrote.

And it charged that just before the invasion Kuwait "had flooded the market with crude to destabilise prices in a bid to starve and murder the Iraqis."

On the eve of the August 1990 invasion, Baghdad accused Iraq of "stealing" fuel from Iraqi wells along their common border and selling huge quantities of crude to bring prices tumbling down. Iraq occupied Kuwait for seven months before Iraqi forces were routed by a U.S.-led multinational coalition in February 1991 in the Gulf war.

Since the invasion Iraq has been subjected to crippling U.N. oil and trade sanctions and its weapons industry has come under U.N. and international scrutiny.

The Al-Thwara, mouthpiece of the ruling Baath Party led by President Saddam Hussein, said the invasion was aimed at "thwarting the imperialist-Zionist plot designed to suffocate and wipe out Iraq."

"This plot was destined to fail thanks to Iraq's struggle, its victories and its determination."

The paper said meanwhile that Iraq had called for a swift implementation of the oil-for-food deal struck with the United Nations to allow it to export $2 billion of oil every six months under strict control to buy badly-needed food and medicines.

The accord was signed in May but has still not been implemented. Information Minister Abdul Ghani Abdul Ghafur made the request in talks Thursday with the U.N. coordinator in Baghdad Mohammed Jezarri, the paper added.

Abdul Ghafur stressed "the need to implement the (Iraqi) plan for food distribution swiftly in line with the accord and outside of any foot-dragging" by the United States.

Washington has refused to give its approval for the deal to be put into effect until it is assured that it will be strictly monitored.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

14:03 Moomin
14:28 Pumpkin Patch
14:42 Here's Lucy
15:07 Varieties
15:25 Olympic Games
19:00 Le Journal
19:10 Olympic Games
22:00 News in English
22:15 Olympic Games

PRAYER TIMES

04:19 Fajr
05:47 (Sunrise) Duha
12:42 Dhuhr
16:22 'Asr
19:37 Maghreb
21:05 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunication Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.
Terrasancta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Normal summer weather conditions will prevail with temperatures around average and winds northwesterly moderate to active. On Sunday, temperatures are expected to drop further becoming slightly below average. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 21/33
Aqaba 26/38
Deserts 19/35
Jordan Valley 25/38
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 36, Aqaba 42 Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent; Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadsheh 759200
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi 894788
Dr. Salman Al Daboubi 776751
Dr. Khalid Abdo 657129
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazan Abu Bakir 276852
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi 989601
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77710/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtainied on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

09:30 Damascus (RJ)
10:20 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 New Delhi (RJ)
11:00 Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ)
11:00 Colombo (RJ)
11:05 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
15:10 Istanbul (RJ)
15:4 New York, Amsterdam(RJ)
17:20 Cairo (RJ)
19:1 London, Munich (RJ)
21:00 Vienna (RJ)
23:00 Madrid (RJ)
02:50 Madrid (RJ)
05:00 Madrid (add) (RJ)
05:30 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights

03:0 Rome (AZ)
13:40 Muscat, Doha (GF)
14:00 Riyadh (SV)
15:00 Vienna (OS)
19:35 Amsterdam (KL)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
20:5 Damascus, Paris (AF)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
21:15 London (BA)
22:00 Sanaa (IY)
22:35 Larnaca (CY)
23:55 London (KJ)
03:00 Kuwait (KL)
03:00 Rome (AZ)
03:30 Antalia (TK)
06:30 Tel Aviv (LY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:50 Aqaba (QAIA — proceeds to Marka airport at 10:00 a.m.) (RW)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:35 Beirut (RJ)
09:45 Istanbul (RJ)
11:00 Madrid (RJ)
12:3 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:3 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:30 Vienna (RJ)
13:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:10 Paris (RJ)
13:15 Brussels, Amsterdam (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
14:05 London (RJ)
17:30 Madrid (add) (RJ)
21:10 Larnaca (RJ)
21:10 Riyadh (RJ)
21:2 Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
00:30 Dahran (RJ)

Other Flights

04:0 Athens (DA)
04:00 Rome (AZ)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
14:3 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:3 Riyadh (SV)
16: Vienna (OS)
20:45 Kuwait (KL)
21:2 Cairo (MS)
23:00 Sanaa (IY)
23:30 Larnaca (CY)
23:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)
04:00 Amsterdam (KL)
04:00 Rome (AZ)
04:30 Antalia (TK)
06:40 London (KJ)
07:25 Tel Aviv (LY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
20:30 Aqaba (RW)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damscus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/500
Banana	600/600
Banana (mukhammar)	520/520
Banana (imported)	800/600
Cabbage	400/300
Carrot	170/90
Cauliflower	250/160
Cucumber (large)	220/140
Cucumber (small)	350/220
Eggplant	200/120
Garlic	650/400
Grapes	420/280
Lemon	670/400
Marrow (large)	250/150
Marrow (small)	400/250
Mulukhiah	110/70
Onion (dry)	150/80
Okra	750/450
Pea	650/400
Pear	750/500
Peach	750/500
Pepper (hot)	320/200



Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and his Algerian counterpart Abdul Karim Harshawi Thursday sign an agreement allowing for free trade between the two countries (Petra photo)

Jordan, Algeria sign free trade agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Algeria Thursday concluded an agreement on launching free trade between them but said that implementation can only take place after the two governments have formally signed the accord in about two months.

Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and his Algerian counterpart Abdul Karim Harshawi signed the minutes of deliberations held in the past week, expressing hope that the accord will mark the beginning of a new fruitful relationship between the two countries

The minutes signed Thursday upon the conclusion of the talks called for Jordan and Algeria to exempt each other from customs duty and other taxes, create a free trade zone and encourage investment from both countries.

The accord also provides for mechanism to prevent dual taxation and for launching direct maritime and land transportation and promoting air transport between the national airlines and the maintenance of Algerian commercial planes in Jordan.

It also provide for cooperation in information, education, cultural, health and pharmaceutical areas, with Jordan accepting to offer medical treatment to Algerian patients. The two countries will also be obliged to facilitate the registration of medicine produced in either country after the agreement goes into effect.

The two sides agreed on cooperation in oil and gas production, with Algeria providing expertise in this domain.

The two sides agreed on forming a joint council of industrialists and traders and to encourage business people from the two countries to launch joint ventures .

Before leaving for home Thursday, the Algerian minister expressed hope that the accord will open new avenues for the private sector of the two countries to bolster Jordanian-Algerian economic and trade links.

House panel slams Iran

AMMAN (Agencies) —The Lower House of Parliament's Arab and International Affairs Committee Thursday called on Iran to withdraw its forces from northern Iraq and not to intervene in Iraq's internal affairs.

In a statement issued Thursday, the committee said the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq should be respected. But it urged Iran and Iraq to settle their differences and to mobilise their capacities and energies to ensure the welfare and prosperity of their peoples and the rest of the region.

The committee described the incursion by Iranian forces into the northern Iraqi borders as an aggression by Iran on Iraq, saying that it constitutes a violation of all the international charters and norms. The committee added that the Iranian incursion into northern Iraq contributed to igniting conflicts and tension at a time when the entire region is involved in serious efforts to establish peace and stability. The statement called on both countries to engage in efforts to achieve fruitful cooperation.

Some 2,000 Iranian troops crossed into northern Iraq last week to attack an Iranian-Kurdish rebel camp at Koi Sanjaq, 50 kilometres from the Iran-Iraq border.

Iraq warned Tehran Thursday against any further incursions into its northern territory. but Iran said the offensive against Kurdish rebels was staged to prevent further cross-border attacks into its territories.

NEWS IN BRIEF

3 killed in road crash

AMMAN (AFP) — Three people were killed instantly and another person seriously injured when a tourist-plated car slammed into a truck near Ma'an, south of Amman, police said Friday. The car slided under a trailer coming on the other direction, killing all passengers late Thursday. The driver was taken to hospital in Ma'an after sustaining serious injuries. It was the third such fatal road crash to be registered in the Kingdom in less than two weeks, raising the death toll to 10.

Orthodox festival opens Sunday

AMMAN (PETRA) — Information Minister Marwan Muasher will Sunday open a week-long festival for Arab Orthodox Youth at the Orthodox school. The festival will brings together Orthodox youth from Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Palestine and participants from non-Arab countries who will be discussing youth problems and proposing solutions to them. The event, which is organised by the Orthodox Educational and Cultural Society in cooperation with the World Orthodox Youth Association (WOYA), will provide an opportunity for Orthodox youth to examine their problems through plenary seminars and workshops and to come up with solutions, according to Fuad Farraj, president of the society.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

* Concert by Lebanese singer Najwa Karam at the South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
* Concert by the University of Jordan Band at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
* Egyptian National Circus and British Five-Star Circus at the Main Theatre at 6:30 p.m.
* Concert by the Jordanian Armed Forces Musical Band, Dalshat Group of Azeri Folklore, and Taipei Folk Dance Troupe a the Main Theatre at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Photo exhibition by Hani Hourani entitled "People and Places" at Baladna Art Gallery (Tel. 687598), until Aug. 15
* "Pioneers of the Fifties" — Works by Iraqi artists Ismail Sheikhly, Khalid Qassab, Suzanne Sheikhly, and Nur Behjet at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Uthaina (Tel. 826932), until Aug. 1.

Milk price rises by 30% immediately after lifting of animal feed subsidies

AMMAN (J.T.)— Subsidies on animal feed were lifted Thursday in a move that is expected to lead to price hikes in a number of commodities but the government has yet to announce what is seen as the more sensitive decision of floating bread prices.

Minister of Supply Munir Sobar said the decision will cause prices of barley to rise to JD 120 from JD 85 per tonne, bran to JD 100 from JD 52.5 per tonne, corn to JD 160 from JD 116 per tonne and soy to JD 270 up from JD 210 a tonne.

Immediately after the minister's announcement on Thursday, the dairy producers raised the price of milk from 230 fils a kilo to 300 fils. According to Fayez Adwan, deputy chairman of Dairy Producers Union, the increase in the price of animal feed will automatically increase the cost of milk production and hence is the increase in the milk prices.

Representative of the Union of Livestock Breeders Mohammad Hamouria was quoted Friday by Al Dustour Daily as expressing regret over the lifting of the subsidies on animal feed "without prior consultation with the local livestock sector," adding that such a move would adversely affect investment in the livestock industry.

The government is expected to announce the "rechannelling" of bread subsidies after the session the Lower House of Parliament will hold to discuss the issue Sunday.

The government says that each Jordanian will receive JD 1.28 a month in compensation for the floating of the bread prices, insisting that only foreign workers and tourists will have to purchase unsubsidised bread.

Government civil servants and armed forces personnel started receiving the compensation at the end of July while nearly 70 major companies said they would pay their employees the difference in the bread prices.

The government's decision to float the price of bread and "rechannel" the subsidy to the public drew angry protests from various political parties and Parliament members.

The 1996 budget allocates JD 38 million for food subsidies but the government says it will need JD 190 million if it maintains subsidies for this year due to the increase of the prices of wheat on the international market.

Opposition parties say that floating bread prices will lead to further deterioration in standards of living in the country and opposition deputies have threatened to seek a no-confidence vote in the government if it goes ahead with its plan to lift bread subsidies.

The House, however, is currently convened in an extraordinary session during which law makers can only discuss issues listed on the agenda of the session as specified by the Royal Decree that called them into session and cannot call for a no-confidence vote.

Private sector allowed to import staple food

AMMAN (AP) — The government, ending its long-standing monopoly on the import of staple food, Thursday said that private companies may now supply the market with sugar, rice and wheat but did not indicate whether it would stop subsidising these items. It also made no mention of allowing private imports of powder milk, the only other food item bought and marketed only by the government.

The announcement came as the government was about to introduce a 200 per cent hike in wheat prices to shore up a huge gap between government allocations for food and the actual import costs.

According to statistics, the allocations barely cover 20 per cent of the annual import bill of JD 200 million.

The government has said it will pay Jordanians JD 15 annually to compensate for the hike in wheat prices.

Information Minister Marwan Munsher has said the increase in wheat prices is in line with the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund, which is supervising an economic reform programme aimed at lifting a burden of foreign debts estimated at $6.3 billion.

The planned measures would bring the price of each kilogramme of bread to JD 0.250 , which is still well below prices in neighbouring countries that have been benefiting from the subsidies to smuggle in flour from Jordan.

Because bread is so cheap, the government says farmers have been giving it to their cattle instead of fodder.

Revenues reach JD 390m in 1st quarter of the year

AMMAN (Petra) — The total revenues for the first three months of this year amounted to JD 390 million, while expenditure totalled JD 370.3 million, according to a statistical bulletin issued by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

The bulletin said total local revenues amounted to JD 364.5 million, thus constituting 93.4 per cent of the total revenues. Total revenue was generated through income tax, customs duties, sales tax and other taxes, the bulletin said. It added that Jordan had been able during the first three months of this year to make a saving of almost JD 20 million, which will help reduce the deficit accumulated over the years.

In a related development, a report on Jordanian imports and exports said Jordan's exports during the first four months of this year amounted to JD 289,094,000 while imports amounted to JD 979,173,000. The report said the European Union countries and the United States topped the list of importers of Jordanian products.

Chemical substances could have caused Zarqa fire — officials

ZARQA (J.T.) — Investigations have not yet determined the cause of the fire that engulfed a storehouse in the Zarqa free Zone on Tuesday but Civil Defence Department (CDD) and Public Security Department (PSD) sources said that initial examination of the ruined store indicate that large amounts of chemical substances in the store are a possible cause.

"The chemicals seemed to have spilled onto cloth which easily caught fire and caused huge material losses," CDD Zarqa Department Director Abdullah Huneiti was Friday quoted by Al Ra'i Arabic daily as saying.

Children's toys and firecrackers stored in the warehouse exploded intermittently soon after the outbreak of the fire, and caused the flames to spread to different sections of the warehouse, Col. Hunieti added.

He said that the store owners failed to consult with the CDD on means of storing their goods, adding that the free trade zone should set up an efficient public safety centre that can promptly deal with fires.

A CDD official said that at least 35 fire engines were called in to extinguish the fire and succeeded in preventing it from spreading to other stores.

Director of the Zarqa Free Zone, Marzouk Hadid, said that most of the basic requirements for dealing with emergencies, including an ambulance, to ensure public safety in the area are available.

But, he said, the management was considering adding a fire fighting centre to deal with emergency cases until the CDD engines arrive.

Kingdom preparing for increased traffic with Iraq

By Suleiman Al Khalidi

Amman (R) — Jordan said Friday it was preparing its transport sector to handle a substantial share of Iraqi imports under the U.N's concluded "oil-for-food" deal.

"We are in the process of getting prepared for implementation (of the deal), which we hope will be in the near future, by enhancing Aqaba port's role and by buying new trucks to handle the rise in traffic," Transport Minister Nasser Al Lawzi said.

Mr. Lawzi told Reuters his Iraqi counterpart assured him in a meeting in Amman last week that the Kingdom would have a pivotal role as a major conduit for its food purchases under the "oil-for-food" deal signed in May.

The United Nations has approved the sale of $2 billion worth of Iraqi crude oil over six months, on a renewable basis, to purchase food and other humanitarian aid for civilians suffering from economic sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad invaded Kuwait.

Jordan hopes that the "oil-for-food" deal woud revive its stagnant economic sectors.

Jordan's business and industrial community hope the U.N. deal will double its $220 million current annual trade with Iraq, seen as its main trading partner.

Iraq has told the Kingdom's businesses it will give them priority in tenders, provided their prices are comparable. The Kingdom has already signed deals worth $120 million for vegetable oils this year.

Most Jordanian businesses are geared towards Iraq and have been greatly harmed by the sanctions.

The strong enforcement of economic sanctions on Iraq led to the paralysis of some major businesses, such as the truck transport business. Re-exports to Iraq through Jordan fell to less than a quarter of the pre-Gulf war level.

The port of Aqaba has suffered most since most Iraqi cargo came to a halt due to the sanctions.

"Under the U.N. deal, Jordan will be able to compete and already has the established logistics. By the time things roll, I believe the sector will feel it substantially," Mr. Lawzi said.

He said Jordan would soon cut Aqaba port's handling fees for Iraqi-bound traffic and expand land transport capacity on the 1,000 km highway linking Jordan and Iraq.

This will allow Jordan to cope with the surge in traffic once Iraqi food purchases begin arriving.

The jointly state-owned Iraq-Jordan land transport company, which handles most of the truck transport between the two countries, is studying six offers from major world suppliers for 150 new trucks in a deal estimated between $15-$20 million.

It will boost the firm's existing 350 trucks, whose activity has been severely curtailed since sanctions were enforced.

One killed in West Bank

(Continued from page 1)

extra Palestinian troops into town at the request of the Palestinian Authority.

Photographers stuck at an Israeli roadblock outside Tulkarem said the Israeli troops had set up a makeshift field hospital, and that several ambulances were on standby.

Meanwhile, Hamas called on its guerrillas on Thursday to renew attacks against Israel in reprisal for the death by torture of a Palestinian prisoner by PNA security forces.

In a statement faxed to an international news agency, Hamas described the death of Mahmoud Jumayal as "a new crime" by the Palestinian self-rule authority.

But it urged the military wing of Hamas, the Izzeddine Al-Qassam, and other militant Palestinian organisations to respond to the killing by attacking Israeli targets.

"We call on our heroic holy strugglers of the sons of Qassam, (the Islamic Jihad's) Qasam, the Fateh Eagles and others to direct their burning fire to the chests of the Zionists alone," the statement said. "Make the arena of confrontation with the occupation the arena of settling accounts with Arafat's authority."

"Let our response to the death of struggler Jumayal...from the cadres of (Palestinian) resistance in the authority's prisons be by striking Zionist targets."

Jumayal, who once was sought by Israel as an activist in Arafat's Fateh movement, was detained in December when PNA security forces rounded up members of a renegade Fateh group.

King to visit Syria today

(Continued from page 1)

had met the King in London last week but gave no other details.

The Jerusalem Post newspaper had reported that Mr. Netanyahu had left Israel last Friday for an unknown destination. He returned Saturday.

Mr. Kabariti also left for London on a surprise visit last Friday to join the King on his lengthy working visit, AFP news agency reported.

Israel army radio and the daily Maariv newspaper said Mr. Netanyahu asked the King to tell President Assad that Israel would like to renew stalled peace talks.

"Let's renew the talks, we have much to discuss," Mr. Netanyahu reportedly said in his message. Maariv said King Hussein planned to pass on the message to Mr. Assad in Damascus on Saturday.

Other reports this week indicated that there is some momentum in contacts between the hardline Netanyahu government and the Syrians.

Commentators pointed to last month's swap of the bodies of two Israeli soldiers for 45 guerrillas of the Shiite Muslim group Hizbollah and 123 bodies of Hizbollah fighters. Hizbollah is based in Lebanon, where Syria remains the main power broker.

Syria was seen as instrumental in making the deal, and Israeli officials have suggested that such goodwill gestures could pave the way for more intense peace negotiations between the sides.

A spokesman for Mr. Netanyahu was evasive when asked about the reports. "I cannot confirm this," Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh told army radio.

Dore Gold, Mr. Netanyahu's foreign policy advisor, visited Amman on Thursday to prepare for Monday's meeting. He then headed to the United States where he was to hold talks Friday with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the U.S. Mideast peace team, the AP reported.

Mr. Gold was also expected to outline to Mr. Christopher the government's new policy of expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The United States considers settlements an obstacle to peace.

FBI: U.S. under terrorist attack

WASHINGTON (R) — FBI Director Louis Freeh warned Congress Thursday that the United States was under attack from foreign terrorists and said new counter-terrorism weapons were needed to fight back.

In testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee, he referred to a series of arrests and convictions since four Islamic fundamantalists were found guilty in the February 1993 bombing that killed six people and injured more than 1,000 at New York's World Trade Centre.

He also cited two bombings in Saudi Arabia since November, the pipe bomb that cast a pall over the Atlanta Olympics Saturday and the still-unexplained crash of a TWA airliner on July 17 that killed all 230 people aboard.

"The United States and its interests both here and around the world are clearly under attack. And we may be in for a very difficult time with respect to continuation of these types of things," Mr. Freeh said.

He said investigators had not yet found any "credible evidence" that a criminal act brought down TWA Flight 800 off New York but he said they did not think mechanical failure was a likely cause.

On the Atlanta bomb that caused two deaths and wounded 111 people, he said the FBI had no evidence "of an international terrorist group or a sophisticated group targeting the Olympics in general with respect to that incident."

But he said the United States was clearly vulnerable to possible future terrorist attacks involving nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. He said he had recently met Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Charles Krulak to discuss a possible joint FBI-Marine study on ways of countering weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Freeh did not name any group or country as being behind what he called "an increasing war" on Americans. But he said last year's arrest of Ramzi Youssef, the alleged mastermind of the World Trade Centre bombing, and the sentencing of Egyptian-born Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman for his role in that bombing were "predicates for more retaliation and more terrorism against the United States."

In response to questions from lawmakers, Mr. Freeh said he was not entirely satisfied with Saudi cooperation on two bombings that have killed a total of 24 U.S. servicemen in the past nine months. "We're certainly not at the level where in my view we need to be" in terms of Saudi cooperation, he said.

"We are moving very quickly with all of our abilities to achieve that level," said Mr. Freeh, who has visited Saudi Arabia twice since a June 25 bombing killed 19 U.S. airmen there.

U.S. officials complained that they were denied a chance to question four men convicted and executed for carrying out a November bombing that killed five Americans.

Responding to Mr. Freeh's comments about the current state of Saudi cooperation, Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Arlen Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican, said: "If we're to stay in Saudi Arabia, we need to have total cooperation."



Farmers weigh their days' worth of tea leaves picked from a tea plantation in Central Burundi. The economic sanctions proposed in the Arusha summit would hit hard at Burundi's economy given that tea and coffee exports make up for at least 85 per cent of the total export income (Reuter photo)

life continues as usual in Burundi despite sanctions

BUJUMBURA (R) — Daily life went about as usual in Burundi, but businessmen expressed worries about the effect of economic sanctions when they bite on the landlocked country.

There were lines no longer than usual at petrol stations and markets were full of imported goods a day after African regional leaders agreed on sanctions to bring down a week-old military junta.

Many residents of Bujumbura appeared unaware of the decision because it had not been announced on state-run Burundi Radio. But some said they heard the news on foreign radio broadcasts.

A tea plantation owner said he had heard about sanctions by radio but hoped his business could survive on domestic sales.

"There will still be a local market and we can dry and store tea here. So it would take several months for the sanctions to be felt," said Cassia Ndayiragise, who owns a plantation at Mugamba south of Bujumbura.

"The sanctions are very serious. We must wait and see if mediation can help. But violence is still the most important problem. Because if there is violence, no one in the countryside can go out and work."

At Bujumbura's main central market, crowds milled around wooden stalls selling milk, milk powder, cooking oil, shoes, electronics and other consumer goods mainly imported from China.

Trucks loaded at the city's brewery, which provides 40 per cent of government revenue, and petrol tankers queued up for refilling near depots guarded by the military outside Bujumbura.

Burundi imports all its oil and petroleum products and its war-shattered economy remains largely dependent on coffee and tea exported by road to the Indian Ocean ports of Mombasa and Dar Es Salaam.

The head of Burundi's second largest coffee exporting company said it was unclear if the embargo would hit exports of coffee, which account for more than 80 per cent of Burundi's hard currency earnings.

"Coffee is very, very important for our country. This embargo would be catastrophic for our economy and poor people. But we don't really know if this embargo will affect our coffee exports," said Charles Ntezahorigwa, head of confort menager coffee exporting firm.

An embargo would also need to cut off oil imports and transport links with Burundi to be completely effective.

But no details of the sanctions were released and it was unclear if they would cover air links with neighbouring states.

"The Air Burundi flight arrived as normal Thursday in Nairobi, refuelled and returned to Bujumbura," the two-aircraft airline's manager in Kenya, Jeff Rwabu, told Reuters.

"There were no problems at all and the next flight is on Saturday." a state-owned Air Rwanda flight also arrived as usual Thursday from the Rwandan capital Kigali, witnesses said.

Leaders who ordered sanctions were from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Zaire and Cameroon, the current chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, and Ethiopia, the former chairman.

Meanwhile the Burundian military Friday prevented foreign journalists from entering the home of former President Jean-Baptiste Bagaza and attending a press conference he had called.

Mr. Bagaza later told AFP by telephone that he was not surprised by the measure. He said that Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi who seized power last week in a military-backed coup, "does not like being criticised, specially by someone credible."

Mr. Bagaza, also a Tutsi, seized power in a coup in 1976 and was himself overthrown by Maj. Buyoya in 1987. Maj. Buyoya relinquished power after losing elections in 1993.

Mr. Bagaza had condemned last week's coup, and Mr. Buyoya had retorted that Mr. Bagaza was not so much against the coup itself as against the fact that it was not Mr. Bagaza who ended up in power.

In the telephone interview, Mr. Bagaza said: " We are very happy that the government (of former President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, a Hutu) is gone, but there were other ways of proceeding than a putsch."

He said he had always been in favour of a national conference leading to a transition government of national unity.



Two Arkansas bankers and allies of President Bill Clinton were acquitted on Aug. 1 on four fraud and conspiracy charges and a mistrial was declared in seven remaining charges against Herby Branscum (left) and Robert Hill (right) (Reuter photo)

White House reacts with relief to Whitewater verdict

WASHINGTON (R) — White House officials reacted with relief Thursday to the partial acquittal of two political allies of President Bill Clin-ton who were accused of fraud and conspiracy by the Whitewater independent counsel.

"The president is happy to learn the news that a jury has acquitted Herby Branscum and Robert Hill of significant portions of the independent counsel's case against them," White House associate counsel Mark Fabiani said.

"This decision by a jury of 12 Americans ought to lay this matter to rest once and for all," Mr. Fabiani said.

An Arkansas jury acquitted Mr. Branscum and Mr. Hill on four fraud and conspiracy charges. A mistrial was declared in the seven other charges against them.

"This is certainly good news," said one White House official shortly after being informed of the outcome.

"Hopefully, this won't encourage more trials and hearings," said another official, refering to the efforts of Whitewater counsel Kenneth Starr and congressional Republicans.

Mr. Clinton loyalists believe Mr. Starr's investigation and probes by the Republican Congress were given new life in May, when the first Whitewater trial ended with fraud and conspiracy convictions against James and Susan McDougal, former business partners of the president and first lady.

Mr. Starr told reporters in Little Rock his probe would proceed. "We would obviously seek to move our investigation forward as rapidly as possible and we are continuing to do that," he said.

Mr. Branscum and Mr. Hill were accused of defrauding their own bank to help Mr. Clinton's 1990 campaign for reelection as governor of Arkansas.

Senior White House aide Bruce Lindsey, one of Mr. Clinton's closest friends, was named an unindicted co-conspirator in the case as prosecutors alleged he persuaded the defendants to conceal illegally two large transactions made by the Clinton campaign with their bank.

Mr. Fabiani said the "not guilty verdicts ... confirm what we already knew: Bruce Lindsey acted properly." Mr. Lindsey served as treasurer of Mr. Clinton's 1990 campaign.

Clinton makes preemptive strike on Dole tax plan

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Thursday hailed booming economic data and dwindling jobless figures as proof his policies work, while top officials warned of "terrible" risks from his Republican rival's tax cut plan.

In a preemptive strike against Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, who next week plans to unveil an economic plan expected to include massive tax cuts, Mr. Clinton promoted his policies by pointing to positive new economic data.

"This economic news shows that our strategy is working," said Mr. Clinton, who made improving the economy the primary focus of his 1992 drive for the White House and hopes the current fiscal figures will help him keep his job.

Mr. Clinton hastily called reporters to the White House Rose Garden to hail new Commerce Department data showing the U.S. gross domestic product grew at a 4.2 per cent annual rate from April through June, the most robust expansion in two years.

The Labour Department also announced that the number of newly out-of-work Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week to 292,000, the lowest in more than seven years.

"The economy is growing," Mr. Clinton said. "Our nation is moving in the right direction. This is not the time to make dramatic changes that reverse our discipline on the deficit."

Sen. Dole, trying to pump new life into his stalled bid to unseat Mr. Clinton, is putting finishing touches on an ambitious tax-cut proposal he plans to unveil Monday.

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, at a White House briefing, raised serious questions about Sen. Dole's approach, even before the details have been released.

"I ... don't think it is healthy to make a proposal of this sort," Mr. Rubin said, claiming "it is not productive to have proposals that are put forth in the public domain that involve undermining ... fiscal discipline."

"I think it would be a terrible, terrible economic misfortune if we were to take another path, and had very large tax cuts that were not fully paid for," he said.

Mr. Clinton has long criticised the tax-cutting policies of his Republican predecessors, saying they only worsened the federal budget deficit and imposed serious burdens on future generations.

Christina Martin, deputy press secretary for the Dole campaign, said "Bill Clinton's self-adulation today over the economic numbers is a second slap in the face of the American taxpayer." She said Mr. Clinton broke "his promise on a middle class tax cut," made in the 1992 campaign but dropped after he was elected, and now "he steps forward to crow about reigning over the first recovery since World War II to leave the American worker behind."

"Bob Dole understands Americans are justifiably worried about their jobs and will act soon to address those very serious concerns," she said.

Philippine Muslim fighters defect to rebel faction

COTABATO, Philippines (AFP) — A breakaway Muslim rebel faction Friday announced that some 2,000 armed fighters of the main insurgent group in the southern Philippines had defected to it.

The mass defection made the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) "the legitimate representative of the Mus-lims fighting for genuine autonomy" in the southern Philippine island of Min-danao, MILF Vice-Chair-man for Military Affairs Mohammad Murad Al-Haj told reporters.

The main Muslim group Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) "no longer represents" the Muslims after its leader Nur Misuari decided to run for governor of a smaller existing autonomous region, he added.

The MILF is a splinter group of the MNLF which signed in June an interim peace agreement with the government in a bid to end 20 years of bloody conflict in the south.

The MILF official's remarks come amid widespread protest from the Christian majority against a proposed regional council to be led by the MNLF that will oversee development projects in Mindanao.

The council will pave the way for the creation within three years of a wider autonomous region to be ruled by the MNLF, whose leader Nur Misuari is also running for governor of the existing autonomous region.

However, Mr. Murad rejected the council's formation, even as the MILF earlier said it would withhold comment on the peace deal until a final agreement is signed in Jakarta within two months.

"The SPCPD (Southern Philippine Council for Peace and Development) is not a solution to the problem in Mindanao," Mr. Murad said.

Executive Secretary Ruben Torres Monday said that the government hoped to get the MILF to the negotiation table if the agreement with the MNLF is not completely acceptable.

Mr. Murad acknowledged that backroom contacts were ongoing between Manila and the MILF and that they were willing to negotiate.

"We are not anti-peace, nor anti-development. But we want peace with justice," he said. The MILF has an existing ceasefire agreement with the military.

He declined to give a figure for the MILF's troop strength, but the military estimates that there are 20,000 MILF members including 15,000 armed fighters, while the MNLF has a membership of 25,000.

Bhutto names husband to new post of investment minister

ISLAMABAD (R) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has named her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, to the newly created post of investment minister, which government sources said was created to encourage foreign investment in Pakistan.

His appointment came a day after he was included among the names of eight new ministers to serve in an expanded cabinet.

Five new deputy ministers of state were also appointed Wednesday and their posts were announced Thursday.

Privatisation Commission Chairman Naveed Qamar was made privatisation minister while Iqbal Haider received the newly created Human Rights Ministry, a government notice said.

Arbab Mohammad Jehangir Khan becomes narcotics minister, assuming an area that previously fell under the interior and narcotics portfolio of Naseerullah Babar, who will now be known as interior and federal investigation minister.

Abdul Sattar was made industries minister in a move which halved the previous industries and production portfolio of Mohammad Asghar, who now will be known as production minister.

Nawaz Khokhar becomes science and technology minister, Rao Sikandar Iqbal sports and tourism minister and Jehangir Badar political and religious affairs minister.

Ministers of state are: Mohammad Yaqub (local government and rural development), Mohammad Ayub Jattak (food), Sahibzada Nazir Sultan (foreign affairs), Nauraiz Shakoor Khan (youth affairs), Mirza Mohammad Nasir Baig (sports), Mohammad Afaq Shahid (works), and Manzoor Hussain Wassan (water).

S. Africa stampede death toll hits 16

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The death toll from South Africa's rail station stampede this week has risen to 16, hospital officials said Thursday.

A commuter who was admitted to hospital after Wednesday's stampede later died of his injuries, the officials said, without giving details.

Police and soldiers guarded the scene Thursday as a limited rail service resumed and a commission of inquiry opened into the deaths.

Metrorail spokeswoman Bintu Petsana said the situation was calm during the day but no attempt was made to ensure passengers had tickets, adding: "We were worried that it might just inflame the situation...We'll look at the ticket issue again soon."

The stampede occurred shortly after six a.m. when private security guards armed with electric prods tried to prevent ticketless passengers from boarding the early-morning commuter rush to Johannesburg.

Dr. Sandile Mfenyana, medical superintendant of the Tembisa Hospital, said Thursday that at least 10 of the victims still in hospital showed clear evidence of electric shock.

Mr. Petsana said Wednesday the crackdown was implemented in an attempt to halt rampant fare-dodging, which was blocking the upgrade of poor apartheid-era commuter services for blacks.

She said Thursday that the South African Rail Commuter Corporation, which owns metrorail, had given 500,000 rand ($110,000) to a disaster relief fund for the stampede's victims.

A commission of inquiry headed by black lawyer Diego Moseneke is investigating the incident and will report to the government within two weeks.

President Nelson Mandela vowed Wednesday his government would do everything necessary to ensure that nothing like the Tembisa disaster ever occured again.

Carl Lewis loses gold — but not for long

ATLANTA (R) — Carl Lewis lost his ninth Olympic gold medal after his historic long jump leap. But it was not for long. Lewis and NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw were due to do an an interview Monday night when autograph-hungry fans forced them to flee in separate cars. Much to Brocaw's surprise, Lewis's pager went off inside his bag. Brocaw realised the medal was in there too. His assistant rang Lewis's assistant who promptly came to retrieve the medal.

Incarcerated cats run up $45,000 repair bill

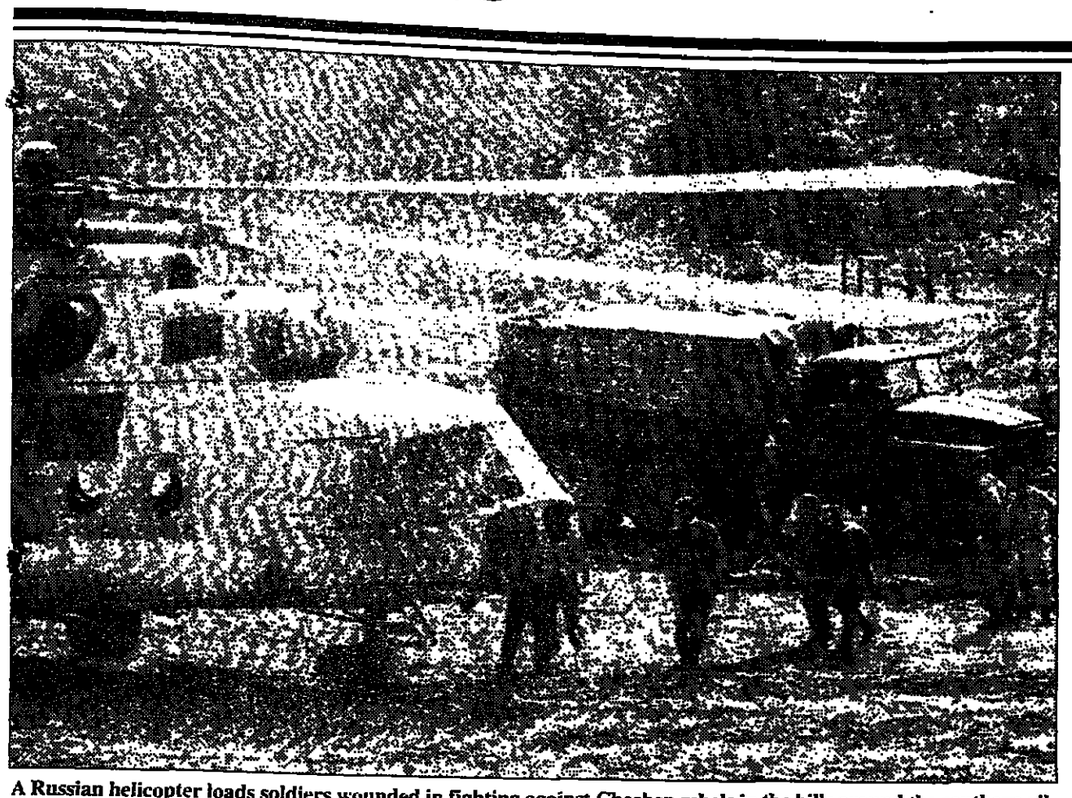
STOCKHOLM (R) — Two Swedish cats caused $45,000 worth of damage after flooding their owner's house while locked in the bathroom. Crestfallen owner Roger Sjoberg told the Kvallsposten newspaper he had come home to find the house flooded and the two frightened cats sitting on the shower taps. "We normally lock them up in the bathroom to stop them wrecking the place while we're out," he said.

Ministry denies Prince Andrew is incompetent officer

LONDON (AFP) — The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has quashed suggestions that Prince Andrew, the second son of Queen Elizabeth II, had decided to leave the Royal Navy because he was not considered good enough for promotion. The 36-year-old prince, who began his naval career in 1979, announced last month that he will leave the navy to take up a new appointment in 1999 at the MOD's headquarters in London, which will last for two-and-a-half years. Friday's Daily Express newspaper quoted an MOD source as saying that Prince Andrew had been taken aside by the First Sea Lord, Jock Slater, and told he stood little chance of being promoted to commander. "It was clear that Andrew simply was not up to the job," the source said. But an MOD spokesman denied the report, saying that the prince was a "highly competent and reliable officer" who had commanded his own ship and was also a very capable pilot. "If he were to stay he would be eligible for a promotion. There is no reason to suggest why he would not get promotion," he added. Prince Andrew, who at the age of 22 fought in the 1982 Falklands War against Argentina, currently serves as a senior pilot of 815 Naval Air Squadron, based in Portland, southwest England.

Texas woman to follow Amelia Earhart's route

OSHKOSH, Wis. (R) — A Texas businesswoman announced plans to retrace Amelia Earhart's attempt to fly around the world in a plane identical to that in which the aviatrix disappeared in 1937. Linda Finch, 45, of San Antonio, said she will take off next March 17, 60 years to the day after Earhart left. The flight will span five continents with more than 30 stops in 20 countries over three months. In one of aviation's enduring mysteries, Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan disappeared on July 2, 1937, somewhere near Howland Island in the Pacific. Ms. Finch and her navigator will be flying a Lockheed Electra 10E powered by two Pratt Whitney Wasp engines. It is one of only two planes identical to Earhart's left in the world and has been restored to look as it did in 1937, she said. Ms. Finch made the announcement at the Annual Experimental Aircraft Association Oshkosh Fly-in.



A Russian helicopter loads soldiers wounded in fighting against Chechen rebels in the hills around the southern village of Shatoi. Russian forces have stepped up their attacks on the region to try to crush Chechen separatists they believe are holed up in the mountains (Reuter photo)

Over 20 civilians die in Russian bombing of Chechen villages

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russian air raids on villages in southern Chechenya have killed more than 20 civilians in the past 24 hours, Chechen spokesman Movlady Udugov said Friday.

Quoted on Moscow Echo radio, Mr. Udugov said that the air raids had in particular targeted roads through mountainous regions in the south of the breakaway republic.

He added that Russian forces Friday morning surrounded and blocked access to the village of Bachi-Yurt in southeastern Chechenya.

Earlier Friday, the Russian Defence Ministry said eight Russian soldiers had been killed and 10 others injured in the past 24 hours in Chechenya.

Defence Ministry spokesman Alexander Ovchiniko, cited by Moscow Echo radio, did not say where the soldiers were killed or injured.

A spokesman for Russian troops in Chechenya for his part told the Interfax News Agency that four soldiers had been killed and eight injured, most of them in an ambush by secessionist rebels in the village of Jalka, east of the capital Grozny.

He added that the rebels were still laying mines on roads used by Russian military convoys and that 14 mines had been defused in the past 24 hours.

A wide-ranging peace accord was reached between the two sides on June 10 — just before the presidential elections in which President Boris Yeltsin badly needed to show he could end the war.

However, shortly after Mr. Yeltsin's reelection in the second round on July 3, Moscow resumed its quest for a military solution and Russian forces went back on the offensive.

An estimated 40,000 people, mostly civilians but also including thousands of Russian soldiers, have died since Russian troops marched into the tiny Caucasus republic in December 1994 to crush a secessionist rebellion.

Meanwhile Chechens waited with mild curiosity Thursday to see if leader of their drive for independence would come back from the dead, but a Russian official suggested a Dzhokhar Dudayev double was more likely than the man himself.

The head of Russia's Federal Security Service, Nikolai Kovalyov, told a news conference he did not believe Dudayev would return. "We have known for a long time that Dudayev 'doubles' are being prepared," he said.

"Several groups have expressed such an intention and we received operative information on this matter. As for his so-called resurrection, I personally do not believe in it," Mr. Kovalyov said.

Chechen leaders said in April that Dudayev was killed by a Russian rocket programmed to home in on his conversation on a satellite telephone.

But rumours that Dudayev was alive gained force last month, fuelled by the surprise appearance of another rebel who had also been given up for dead.

Commander Salman Raduyev, who led a daring raid on a town just outside the rebel region, burst back the scene on July 18 with a face altered by plastic surgery after a sniper attack which some said believed had killed him.

He said Dudayev would return.

Local residents in the Chechen capital Grozny said anything was possible in the unpredictable rebel region.

"I heard it on television," said newspaper seller Totsita Khamzayeva, asked about the rumour that Dudayev could return Friday. "I believe he's alive but I don't think he will come back tomorrow."

Dudayev's 1991 independence declaration provoked the bloody intervention by Russian troops three years later.

Chechens compare him with their 19th century hero Imam Shamil, who fought off tsarist Russia's attempts to conquer the north Caucasus region for decades. Shamil also disappeared and then reappeared to continue the fight against Russia.

The circumstances surrounding Dudayev's reported death were always shrouded in mystery. Journalists have not seen the grave or the videotape of the funeral said to have taken place and Commander Raduyev's return only stoked the rumour mill.

The Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda said Dudayev and Commander Raduyev's disappearances had been arranged under pressure from the United States and Turkey, who thought a peace deal with Moscow would be more likely if they were out of the way.

Russian Television and ITAR-TASS news agency, citing the Groznensky Rabochiy newspaper, said Wednesday that Dudayev would return to Chechenya Friday.

The newspaper was not due to reach newsstands until Friday and a dummy of the front page being printed Thursday made no mention of sources saying that Dudayev would return.

Editor Musa Muradov said his correspondent accompanying the rebels had told him sources in the separatist leadership had said Dudayev would come back Friday and rebels were planning to retake Grozny from the Russian forces to mark his return.

"It's possible. After all, the rebels took Grozny in March," Mr. Muradov said.

He said he had not printed the story because his correspondent could not name his source. But he had related the story to a TASS correspondent who had then quoted the newspaper as if the story had appeared.

"He's given the paper some free advertising," said Mr. Muradov with a laugh. "If only I'd ordered an extra print run."

Sporadic fighting kills 6 in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas gunned down two security personnel in northeastern Sri Lanka as four more people were killed in sporadic violence elsewhere, the military said Friday.

Gunmen of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) shot dead the off-duty security men in the coastal town of Nilaveli Thursday, the military said in a statement.

It said three civilians were killed in a Tiger mine attack that hit a bullock cart in the northern peninsula of Jaffna Thursday.

A Tiger rebel in the area also committed suicide by swallowing cyanide to avoid arrest.

The sporadic violence came as hundreds of government soldiers poured into a key town captured from the Tigers in northern Sri Lanka ahead of a fresh onslaught against the rebels.

Security forces were massing at Paranthan to launch an offensive against the LTTE, officials said, adding that long-range attacks continued in the area.

The LTTE in a statement from its London office said that 10 civilians were killed in mortar attacks carried out by the security forces Wednesday in the town of Kilinochchi.

Government forces are within six kilometres of Kilinochchi, where the LTTE relocated its political headquarters after being driven out of Jaffna.

The military took Paranthan last Saturday as the government abandoned a 1,300-strong military garrison at Mullaitivu, about 60 kilometres to the southeast.

The garrison was routed following a huge Tiger assault on July 18. The Tigers claimed they killed 1,208 soldiers for the loss of 241 of their own fighters but the government has yet to officially admit its high losses.

Tiger guerrillas are leading a protracted campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.

English voted as the official language of the U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — The House of Representatives has approved a bill designating English as the official language of the United States and requiring that government business be conducted in English.

The Republican-backed bill was sent up to the Senate on an 259-169 vote.

The growing use of Spanish and questions about immigration have become an increasing focus of legislators around the country, particularly in California, and 23 states have designated English as their official language.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich warned that teaching foreign tongues as the primary language in schools could lead to the "decay of the core parts of our civilisation."

The measure could be vetoed by President Bill Clinton. The White House called the bill "highly objectionable," saying it faced serious constitutional questions and would make it more difficult for the government to communicate with its citizens.

The bill requires that naturalisation ceremonies and other government business be conducted in English. It also repeals a voting rights act provision guaranteeing ballots in other languages to Americans who have trouble with English.

The bill excludes such phrases as the Latin motto of the seal of the United States, "E Pluribus Unum," which means "one out of many," the motto appears on U.S. dollar bills, coins and on a huge stained glass seal on the ceiling of the House.

It also makes exception for native American languages.

But many Hispanic and other members of Congress argued that even with those exceptions the bill was flawed.

California Democratic Representative Esteban Torres called it "a misguided effort to legislate the very obvious" and Texas Democratic Representative Kika De La Garza said it was "mean-spirited — I don't care how you camouflage it."

Mr. Gingrich said the bill was vital, condemning the teaching of children in dozens of different native tongues in public schools around the country.

"This isn't bilingualism," he said. "This is a level of confusion which, if it was allowed to develop for another 20 or 30 years would literally lead, I think, to the decay of the core parts of our civilisation." However, the bill would not apply to the local governments that operate schools.

De Klerk aims new party campaign at poor S. Africans

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — Frederik De Klerk's conservative, formerly elitist National Party (NP) late Thursday opened its first major conference since becoming South Africa's major opposition by announcing a campaign against poverty.

Mr. De Klerk, whose party left Nelson Mandela's coalition government on June 31 with the stated intent of attracting more black supporters, told the conference here that the NP would develop an anti-poverty initiative to counter that developed by the government.

"It pains me to say it, but it must be said — our country is slipping. Things are beginning to go wrong. The danger lights are flashing," he said.

While Mr. De Klerk praised President Mandela's "admirable efforts", he sharply criticised the African National Congress for promoting Peter Mokaba, a former firebrand leader of the ANC's Youth League, to deputy environment minister, in place of Bantu Holo-misa, who was ousted last week.

While President Mandela tries to reassure overseas investors, powerful trade unions and the South African Communist Party have strongly challenged the ANC's economic plan, Mr. De Klerk further claimed.

He accused the ANC's housing minister, Sanki Nkondo, of failing to build houses, while the government wasted posts and telecommunications budgets on frivolities.

The NP's anti-poverty planners will begin by consulting grass roots supporters, experts, and non-government organisations, Mr. De Klerk said.

Britain begins destroying 'orphan' human embryos

LONDON (R) — British fertility clinics began destroying thousands of "orphan" embryos Thursday after a government deadline passed at midnight, despite opposition from "pro-life" groups and the reluctance of doctors.

The embryos were created in laboratories by fertilising human eggs with sperm outside the womb for implantation into women unable to have children by natural means.

The government says the frozen embryos must be disposed of after five years, unless their parents request that they be kept longer or donated for "pre-natal" adoption or research.

But thousands of parents cannot be traced, and pleas from in-vitro fertilization (IVF) specialists for more time to find them failed, leaving doctors with no option but to destroy the embryos.

"It has been very distressing and frustrating for everyone," said Professor Ian Craft from the London Gynaecology and Fertility Centre.

Peter Brinsden, medical director of the Bourn Hall Clinic in Cambridge, where up to 900 embryos were being destroyed, said his staff had gone through mail and faxes carefully this morning in the hope of finding last-minute requests from "parents."

"I do not feel good about allowing one embryo to perish without a patient's permission, let alone 800 or 900," he said.

The process of disposal at his clinic is expected to take two days.

Pro-life groups held overnight candle-lit vigils, singing hymns and saying prayers outside clinics across Britain before what they called "the mass destruction of human life" began.

More than 3,000 embryos are being destroyed because their parents failed to reply to letters from the clinics warning them of the deadline. Another 2,000 to 3,000 are due for disposal because their parents no longer want them.

Wednesday night's deadline was the first under a law passed in 1990. The tiny, four-cell embryos were being thawed out, killed by adding a drop of alcohol or water and then incinerated along with other hospital waste.

Even though thousands of embryos are routinely destroyed each year during IVF research and treatment, the large-scale disposal has provoked outrage in Britain and elsewhere.

The Vatican called it "pre-natal massacre."

"The embryos are human beings. Once they have been produced, they have a right to grow. Killing them would add a crime against the life of a human being to the illegitimacy of their production," Vatican Radio in Italy said.

The speaker of Italy's lower house of parliament turned down a request from far-right deputy Alessandra Mussolini for a minute's silence to mourn the destruction of the embryos.

British anti-abortion group LIFE addressed a written plea for a halt to the disposal to the government's solicitor Peter Harris, but his office said he was powerless to act.

"Mr Harris can only act when appointed by a court," it said. "Furthermore, he can only act as the representative on behalf of a natural person — a life in being. Until a child is delivered it does not have an independent legal persona."

LIFE says its has been approached by 25 British couples and two each from Germany and the United States who want to adopt the embryos, but who cannot because the law says the natural parents must give their consent.



Some 500 supporters of ousted leader of Indonesia Democratic Party Megawati Sukarnoputri disperse as anti-riot policemen follow in Jakarta's busy shopping area near a central district court on Aug. 1. Megawati Sukarnoputri supporters gathered when the court started the hearing of her suit against the government and the military for backing a rebel congress last June (Reuter photo)

Indonesian union leader charged with subversion

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesian trade union leader Muchtar Pakpahan has been formally charged with subversion, in a move analysts said was part of the government's strategy to use weekend riots in a sweep against dissidents.

"We charged him (Pakpahan) Thursday and the interrogation is still continuing," a senior official from the attorney general's department, who requested anonymity, told AFP Friday.

Subversion carries a maximum penalty of death and allows the authorities to detain a person for up to one year without trial.

Mr. Pakpahan, is the general chairman of the Indonesian Prosperity Trade Union (SBSI) that the government considers illegal.

He was arrested at his home Tuesday night in connection with violent weekend riots in which three people died and more than 20 were injured.

SBSI officials have denied the union was involved with the riots.

"I think first they (the government) are trying to collect all their opponents and the riots are being used as an excuse to take all those people to jail," said Lutfi Hakim, SBSI official.

Sociologist Arief Budiman also said Mr. Pakpahan's arrest was a sign the government was "taking advantage" of the current unrest.

"The government is intimidating people, trying to crackdown on the opposition movement," Mr. Budiman said.

The Legal Aid Institute said Friday that police have arrested two activists from the Peoples' Democratic Party (PRD), the group which has been publicly accused of fomenting the riots.

Officials have said all members of PRD are now wanted. Many PRD activists have gone into hiding and fled the capital, sources close to the group said.

"The only reason they have arrested Pakpahan is because he has the potential to organise a labour movement," sociologist Arief Budiman said.

SBSI, set up by Mr. Pakpahan in 1992, has been the target of government and military harrassment ever since.

On Friday morning, police arrested nine SBSI members in the town of Duri, Riau in North Sumatra because they had organised a two day workers rights training session.

The government only recognises one official trade union, known as the All Indonesian Workers Union. It has crushed any other attempts at forming independent unions.

Mr. Hakim said he also believed the government wanted to arrest Mr. Pakpahan because he heads a new organisation known as the Indonesian Peoples' Tribunal (MARI), set up after violent clashes between military and demonstrators last month.

MARI groups more than 30 pro-democracy groups including the SBSI and the new political party of outspoken politican Sri Bintang Pamungkas.

"The government dislikes the aims of MARI and they want to stop it. They think it is the embryo of a revolution," Mr. Hakim said.

Mr. Pakpahan has been detained in the Intelligence Operation Centre of the attorney general's department for three days, however an official said those questioning him were "using the due process of law."

The arrest of Pakpahan has sparked calls from the United States and Australia for due process.

"We ... call on the Indonesian government to ensure that all those arrested and detained, including Mr. Pakpahan, are given due process," U.S. embassy spokesman Craig Stromme told AFP.

"We urge that Mr. Pakpahan and any others arrested in the wake of the July 27 riots be given their full rights and due process under Indonesian criminal law and in accordance with international standards," said Gregson Edwards, spokesman for the Australian embassy.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Thursday called for the immediate release of Mr. Pakpahan.

"He has been harassed, intimidated and attacked over a period of months and this would seem to be the latest incident in the series and the most serious," said ACTU spokesman Alan Matheson in Melbourne, Australia.

Mr. Pakpahan was jailed for three years by a Medan court in North Sumatra in November 1994 for inciting mass labour unrests there in April that year.

The government blamed his union for the week-long mass unrest which degenerated into anti-ethnic Chinese rioting that led to one death.

The Supreme Court has since exonerated Mr. Pakpahan of all charges, however a judicial review into that decision is still pending.

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Unjustified methods

THE OUTRAGE that has engulfed Palestinians since the death of a detainee from injuries he suffered at the hands of Palestinian interrogators last week should ring with alarm among Palestine National Authority (PNA) officials who need to understand that their people will not accept, cannot endure and certainly do not deserve, any more illegal and inhumane acts from either the PNA or Israel.

Nothing justifies the way in which the PNA police treated or rather mistreated Mahmoud Jemayel regardless of the charges on which he was arrested. That is why no one should be taken by surprise at the reaction of the Palestinian people and their demand for a thorough investigation of the incident and punishment for its perpetrators.

The Palestinian people have suffered enough under the yoke of Israeli occupation and the last thing they expect is to continue to receive such treatment from their own national authority which they fought dearly to usher into power. While the PNA is trying to consolidate its legitimacy and authority in the Palestinian territories nothing but the application of law and the institutionalisation of democracy will strengthen its credibility before its people and the international community alike.

It is obvious that the Palestinian leadership is coming under tremendous pressure from Israel to crack down on Palestinians seen to be opposed to the peace deals with the Jewish state. But the PNA can stand up to this pressure by insisting that it will only employ legal means in addressing the security and other problems facing it and the peace process.

The riots that erupted in Palestinian cities in the past two days should be the prelude for a reassessment process ending in producing unequivocal commitment by the PNA to respect the law, human rights and democracy. The Palestinians have demonstrated their willingness to accept hardships as their national authority tries to establish itself and assert its sovereignty over both the Palestinian land and people. But their reaction to the Jemayel death clearly shows that they are not willing to accept practices similar to those applied against them by the occupation forces. The PNA cannot but heed this message and act immediately to redress all the ills that have accompanied its short period in power. That much the PNA owes to its people and their cause.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE RECENT revelation in Israel that two senior military intelligence agents had crushed the skulls of two Palestinians youths to death reflects the true nature of Israel's barbaric occupation rule; it is an outrageous act, unprecedented in history and not done even by the Nazis during World War II, said Husni Ayesh, a writer for Al Ra'i. Not only was the brutal act condoned by the Israeli government, but the officers who committed this crime in cold blood have been promoted in rank and currently assume key positions in the Zionist hierarchy, said the writer. The criminal act and the reward given the officers who committed it during the years of the intifada clearly show that the whole Israeli society and government are accomplices and far from being a democratic nation as the Zionist leaders have been claiming, said to the writer. He said that the violations of human rights of the Palestinians and the barbaric actions continually committed against the civilian population in Palestine have not discouraged the United States and Europe from continuing their economic and military aid to the Jewish state and so becoming involved in the complicity against the Arab people of Palestine.

A WRITER for Al Dustour warned against Jewish domination of the Arab media, noting that some Israelis are planning to issue an international Arabic daily from London and later start an international television station there with the aim of spreading Zionist influence in the Arab World. Nabil Sharif said that European countries abound with Arabic language dailies and weeklies which tend to serve the Arab or foreign countries that finance them rather than the Arab World, as they have proved so far. The writer urged the Arab countries to take countermeasures and publish an Arabic language newspaper, in London or elsewhere, to truly represent the Arabs and to air their views to the world and not reflect the views of the financiers but rather the whole Arab Nation so that it can win credibility and be accepted by Arabs across the board.

Jordanian Perspective

Dr. Musa Keilani

Erbakan does not have the stuff caliphs are made of

IN NOVEMBER 1991, a well-dressed Turkish guest named Necmettin Erbakan asked his Jordanian hosts to arrange for him, while waiting to see His Majesty King Hussein, to visit the Turkish military cemetery in Salt, to pray for the soul of his two uncles, buried there, who had fought Gen. Allenby's British soldiers in 1919. Mr. Erbakan was not prime minister in 1991; he was a member of the world Islamic movements' delegation which included Egyptian, Sudanese, Syrian and Palestinian leaders who came to see His Majesty King Hussein in an effort to mediate an end to the Gulf war.

Though he did not evince the signs of a charismatic leader years ago, its seems that there are serious efforts at the moment to cultivate Erbakan as a world leader of Islamic movements around whom all fundamentalists will rally. The idea behind the whole concept is to discredit Iranian Shiite claim to leadership as well as Sudanese Tourabi's claim.

Last week leaders of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood met in Amman to elect a new "muraqib aam" (supervisor) and to send a lengthy message of congratulations to the new Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. The Kuwaiti Brotherhood leaders, who came to Jordan to act as observers and representatives of the world Muslim Brotherhood did not hesitate to add their signatures to the congratulatory message.

But how far is Erbakan qualified to be the "imam" of a new Islamic world movement replacing the traditional Egyptian-held leadership of Islamic revivalist movements.

An Egyptian envoy, Seif Hassan Al Banna, was not given a visa to enter Turkey though he is married to a Turkish wife and though he is place among the top nine in the hierarchy of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, being the eldest son of the founder Hassan Al Banna.

Sudan's strong man, Dr. Hassan Abdullah Al Tourabi, had earlier rebelled against the Egyptian leadership in the Brotherhood. He had refused the "custodianship of Ruhollah Musawi Al Khomeini when the Iranian imam invited Dr. Tourabi in an effort to unify world Islamic movements under the leadership of one leader. Consequently, it is not expected that Dr. Tourabi will give this leadership role to Erbakan.

So, what do we expect of Erbakan? Thirty years ago, he joined the Sufi order of "Nakshabandi" and was urged by his "Hadra" to form a political party in 1969. The Jordanian and world Islamic movements are of Salafi traditional orientation to whom the spiritualism of the Sufi order is an anathema. For them, the mantle of a new caliph does not fit the measurements of Turkish Erbakan.

Erbakan is not expected to give others the Islamic model which is a prerequisite for a leadership role. He cannot challenge fundamental Turkish policies affecting Israel or secularism. The Turkish National Security Council (NSC) overrules all prime ministers and cabinet members. The NSC is dominated by ten members of army generals and secularists whose presence outweighs the only one vote of Erbakan. So Erbakan cannot establish a leadership role by Islamising the Turkish society or adding a pro-Arab tone to its foreign policy. His failure to impose an Islamic order in Turkey will deny him the role his Refah Party wants for him.

Refah's leverage will be undermined by the powerful military who noticed earlier the increase in Islamist popularity due to the opposition status taken during the last three decades.

With assumed responsibility for governing, it was believed Refah would be forced to make controversial decisions, thus hurting its popularity.

To sum up, it is very doubtful that anybody would take seriously what the U.S. State Department spokesman said recently that the Turkish commitment to secularism is not a crucial component of U.S.-Turkish relations. Such a statement leads to great confusion regarding U.S. intentions.

Iran is naturally disturbed by the special image-building measures given to Turkey's new prime minister. Over 90 per cent of the Muslim World follow the same Sunni religious sect like Turkey rather than the Shiite "madhab" and sect. Moreover, Turkey has more than 300,000 troops and massive amounts of aircraft to justify putting an end to an Iranian rivalry, ideologically or militarily.

Is Erbakan being recreated to be the new Khomeini of Sunni Muslims, controlled and tailor-sized? Whatever are the motives, I do not think that role suits him.

Atlanta Olympics will be remembered, all for the bad reasons

By G. H. Jansen

THE CENTENNIAL Olympic Games at Atlanta have been criticised by American and foreign observers and participants for a variety of reasons to the extent that they have become known as the "Shambles Olympics". While most critics have enumerated the games' very many shortcomings, few have delved into the fundamental reasons for Atlanta's failure as an Olympic venue.

First and foremost, Atlanta has an inhospitable climate. The weather in the southern American state is notoriously hot and humid in summer and this could not but have an adverse impact on athletes from the northern hemisphere, especially when called upon to exert maximum effort.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) should never have agreed to hold the games in Atlanta at this time of year. Replying to criticisms of the choice of this venue, the IOC claims that it was deliberately misled and given wrong information on Georgia's climate by the local committee which was desperate to secure the venue for Atlanta, come what may. But since Georgia's weather is well-known, the IOC cannot seriously claim to have been misinformed.

Second, Atlanta is located in the heartland of the American south. Indeed, it can be said that Atlanta and Georgia are not in the thrusting, efficient United States but in a completely different country called "The South". This is a country with its own ethos, a much nicer and friendlier and hospitable country than the north with its capitalistic ethos and stress on punctuality and efficiency.

Southern lack of attention to organisational detail and inefficiency were obvious from the first minutes of the game because at the opening ceremony, a prolonged and lavish affair, national contingents did not enter the stadium one behind the other, but in groups with irregular gaps between them. For the organisers had not taken into account the fact that the contingents had to climb up and down long flights of stairs which, naturally, the individuals and their groupings covered at different speeds. (A member of the organisation committee died of heart failure before the games because he had to endure this trial).

A similar lack of imaginative forward-planning dogged the organisational aspect of the games throughout. Although this was in large part due to the southern ethos, another factor was that Atlanta is not a metropolis but merely a large town. The central core of Atlanta is inhabited by only three-quarters of a million people while its greater "catchment area" has a population of only three million. As a southern backwater, Atlanta is unused to hosting large events like the games which bring many nationalities together and are followed closely by a sophisticated worldwide audience.

Because Atlanta is not a metropolis it has neither an efficient bus or underground transport system. And the transport system in place is suitable only for moving a very limited number of people from place to place not a mass influx of visitors and tourists. The lack of experience of the city fathers led them to make inadequate arrangements for the transportation of the athletes to their events. Buses were brought in from other nearby cities but this only created confusion and delay because drivers from elsewhere did not know their way around Atlanta. Some athletes who had trained for months and years missed their events because bus drivers took the wrong route while others, on at least half a dozen occasions, hijacked vehicles so as not to be late for performances. One exasperated contestant was to ask: "Doesn't anything work in this city?"

And many things did not because Atlanta was not prepared to make the cash investment in the infrastructure needed for such an event — as did Barcelona four years ago. Instead Atlanta tried to make do with what it had and what it could coax out of the sponsors of the Games. One example of such making do came in for sharp criticism from the athletes. That was the rooms allotted to them in the dormitories of a local university. These chambers were so small that guests moved the furniture onto outside balconies to give themselves space to move around. Perhaps the most glaring and noticeable example of straightforward, unimaginative inefficiency was the new water sports complex built to accommodate 15,000 spectators but which provided no toilet facilities. This deficiency was met by introducing two portable toilets.

The IOC also failed to take into account Atlanta's well-known reputation as a violent city. If it had, the bomb in the park might, just, have been foreseen.

The choice of Atlanta as a venue must be blamed on the IOC which made its selection on the basis of funding rather than suitability. And this dependence on commercial sponsorship was another cause for criticism because the games were overwhelmed by commercialism and commercialisation. Thus, Coca-Col, IMB, Reebok and McDonalds paid enormous sponsorship fees in exchange for the right to provide exclusive services. But, for instance, when IBM computers were meant to deliver the results of the various events, they did not function properly. And NBC, which secured the exclusive right to televise the games, did not provide the sort of coverage the American public expected. Thus, American viewers were appalled to find that out of every 300 minutes telecast, five hours of viewing time, a mere 70 minutes went to games in progress, 75 minutes were devoted to commercials and the rest of the time was used for reruns and what Americans call "hype".

Unfortunately a great deal of that "hype" was pure American chauvinism, vainglorious boasting and bragging over the exploits, past and present, of American athletes. The cameras and coverage focused on American contestants and excluded most others, demonstrating that "sportsmanship" is no longer an important value for the American media, if not the public. To their credit, American commentators in the quality press have expressed their disgust at such chauvinism.

American chauvinism was displayed by the focus of the public and media on the medal count — the number of "golds" won by their athletes — which they expected to exceed those of any other country. And they expected so many "golds" because the U.S., with a population of 250 million, fielded no less than 600 contestants. China, with a population of over one billion was second with 500.

The bomb which shattered the calm of the Olympics also destroyed the supreme self-confidence of the American organisers and put an end, at least for some time, to chauvinistic displays by American participants and spectators. The Atlanta Olympics will be remembered. Not for the sporting performances of great athletes (or even the bomb) but because of the heat and humidity and the buses which did not turn up on time.

Peace with Lebanon, Syria — right only if based on U.N. resolutions

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

ISRAEL'S NEW moves towards clinching a separate peace treaty with Lebanon, the situation in the Middle East in light of Israel's intransigent stand towards the Palestinians, international terrorism and domestic affairs dominated the articles in the local Arabic press in the past week.

By proposing the idea of Lebanon first, Israel is aiming at isolating and weakening Syria and exercising pressure on Damascus to accept the Jewish state's conditions for peace, said a writer for Al Ra'i daily.

Mohammad Barhoumeh said that the Israelis have offered negotiations to pull out from Lebanon but with the preconditions that Syria guarantee security along Israel's northern border, that Hizbollah be disbanded and that the so-called south Lebanese army be incorporated into the Lebanese army.

Getting rid of Hizbollah as a resistance force in southern Lebanon and forcing Syria to guarantee Israel's security have motivated Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu to make his proposals that are unacceptable to Beirut and Damascus alike, said the writer.

He said the only acceptable formula is Israel's compliance with U.N. Security Council resolution on withdrawal from occupied Lebanese territory.

The Arab countries, in general, and the Palestinians, in particular, are indebted to Syria for its rejection of Israel's offer to pull out its forces from Lebanon on certain conditions humiliating to the Arabs and for Damascus's refusal to conclude a separate peace treaty with the Jewish state, said Taher Adwan.

Israel is clearly aiming at concluding a separate treaty with Lebanon first and Syria afterwards so as to act with free will inside the occupied Palestinian lands, carry out its expansionist plans and Judaise the Arab city of Jerusalem, said the writer.

One can imagine how Israel would act towards the Palestinians and their legitimate rights in their homelands in case Lebanon and Syria signed separate peace treaties with the Jewish state, he added. For this reason, said the writer, a joint Syrian-Palestinian stand is of paramount importance at the moment and a strong backing for such a stand on the part of the other Arab states is urgently needed to abort Israel's plots.

Ibrahim Al Absi, a writer for Al Ra'i, drew attention to the danger inherent in the Israeli supreme court's decision to allow Israelis to pray at Al Aqsa Mosque, one of the holiest shrines for Muslims, describing the move as intending to complete the chain of conspiracy against the holy shrine. This is an unprecedented challenge to hundreds of million of Muslims around the globe and a flagrant violation of the sanctity of holy shrines in Jerusalem, said the writer.

What the Israelis intend to do is first, to partition the mosque to allow Jews to pray alongside Muslims and second, to pave the ground for gradually encroaching on the rights of Muslims and finally ruin the mosque.

With this move, which is blessed by the Israeli government in keeping with the Likud promises to the Israeli electorate, said the writer, the battle for Jerusalem has begun. He said that this new challenge surfaced after Israel has tightened the noose around the Arab city with new settlements, after confiscation of Arab-owned lands and eviction of the local Arab inhabitants.

The Israeli court's verdict allowing Jews access to the Muslim shrines in Jerusalem is a violation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty which considers Jordan as holding a special role with regard to the holy shrines, said Mohammad Subeihi, a writer for Al Dustour.

Urging the Jordanian government to break its silence and move to restore its rights and to take a firm stand against the dangerous Israeli violation, the writer said everybody knows what happened to the Ibrahimi Mosque, which was partitioned to serve the Jews and Muslims according to Israeli plans.

He said the Hebron case should prompt the Arabs and Muslims to act before it is too late to save the Aqsa Mosque. The writer said that the Jordanian government should make its moves when Netanyahu visits Jordan this week, making it clear that it can by no means accept this dangerous violation which encroaches on the religious rights of the Islamic Nation.

Accusing the United States of using acts of terrorism and blackmail against the Arabs and Muslims, a writer for Al Ra'i daily said that Washington is behind the terrorism in the region directed against millions of Arabs and Muslims and continues to humiliate the Arab Nation and pillage its oil wealth.

The writer said that the U.S. is blackmailing Saudi Arabia by claiming that its forces are in the Arabian Peninsula for the sake of protecting the Arabs and so it is demanding that the Arab country foot the bill for the deployment American forces there. This is blackmail and an extension to the second Gulf war which drained the resources of the Arab countries in the Gulf and it is a form of colonisation of Arab lands, charged Amal Abbasi.

America is justifying its presence in the Gulf region by continuing to allege that the Arabs face an external danger and is creating dangerous situations and perpetrating acts of terrorism in order to subdue the Arabs and ensure their continued domination of Arab territory.

While the acts of terrorism in Oklahoma, Atlanta and against the TWA plane indicate that Americans are behind these crimes, Washington continues to accuse Muslims and Arabs of terrorism and threatening to impose sanctions on Libya, Sudan and Iran, said Samih Maaitah, a writer for al Dustour.

Washington should realise that the Arabs and Muslims are not interested in carrying out acts of terrorism simply because these actions do not serve their causes and should free itself from the influences of the Zionist lobby which, every time a bomb explodes somewhere in the world, tries to pin it on the Arabs and Muslims, said the writer.

By continually blaming the Arabs and Muslims unjustly for terrorist actions around the world, the U.S. is clearly strengthening the Israeli hold on the occupied Arab lands and holy shrines.

A writer for Al Ra'i daily called on Jordanians to heed the call of the late Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Sharaf who, as far back as 1980, had urged Jordanians to rationalise spending. Subhi Fahmawi said Jordanians ought to follow the example of nations which continually cut down on spending and take extra measures to safeguard the environment.

Citing the example of several countries, the writer said in France, the prime minister arrives at work in an ordinary small car and in Italy, the government exempts from customs duty all 800-cc vehicles and imposes heavy taxes on larger cars and so protect the environment from pollution and cut down on expenses.

Furthermore, he said, in India officials do not get a single penny in addition to their normal salaries if they travel abroad on official business and in Sweden, small houses are encouraged to prevent unnecessary spending on furniture and heating. The writer said that Jordanians should follow

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Pla

SEATTLE (R — Wine lovers may sniff at the idea of plastic corks in their favourite Chardonnay, but the plugs produced by a Seattle-area company are now used by 100 wineries around the world.

Supreme Corq Inc of Kent, Washington, founded in 1992, is one of three manufacturers worldwide trying to buck tradition, which holds that bottles of fine wines must be stoppered by cork from the bark of trees grown in Spain, Portugal or North Africa.

The company's corks, made of the same high-quality plastic used in artificial heart valves, can be turned to look like the real thing, but the brightly coloured versions, in shades like denim, forest green and Cabernet (a light red), are more popular.

"The colouring of the cork has really become a packaging item," says company President Jerry Zech. "The public likes the idea that you're not trying to look like a fake cork."

One California winery, Murphy-Goode Estate Winery, uses purple plastic corks to match its label.

While purists may prefer natural corks, they are increasingly expensive and

What becomes of young fighters when the fighting stops?

By David Guttenfelder
The Associated Press

MONROVIA, Liberia - Young ray benedict killed "plenty" people with his grenade launcher during Liberia's war, becoming famous on the streets of Monrovia.

Rambo Farley fought on the other side, using an automatic rifle almost as long as he is tall.

Ray and Rambo traded their childhoods for a chance to kill. Now they are trying to get on with their lives in the city they looted and leveled.

Nearly deaf after launching rocket-propelled grenades from his shoulder for the past six years, Ray sits on a quiet beach with fellow fighters who survived the war, joking and talking about friends who did not.

Ray, who looks about 20 but is unsure of his age, says he came to Monrovia for the first time on April 12 when warlord Charles Taylor brought in reinforcements for his National Patriotic Front of Liberia faction.

Taylor launched Liberia's civil war in December 1989 to oust the corrupt government of President Samuel Doe. His and six other factions have been battling for control of the country ever since.

The fighting moved into the capital in April, when the interim government tried to arrest a faction leader on murder charges and thousands of young fighters flocked in from the countryside to back their leaders.

One of those fighters was Ray.

Unable to spell his own last name, Ray is shaky on the details of his past. He says he was recruited by the NPFL in 1990 and taken from his village to Taylor's headquarters in Gbarnga. Since then he has been launching grenades.

"They told me there would be advantages if I was a soldier in Gbarnga," Ray said. "Not money, but I'd be defending my country."

When he came to Monrovia, Ray quickly earned a reputation as the most efficient killer on the front line. He was the only fighter who used a rocket launcher to strike down groups of rivals.

Younger boys without weapons made toy grenade-launchers from fire extinguishers and ketchup bottles and carted them in the streets to imitate his courage. Rival fighters on the other side often shook their heads, mumbling "Hey, Ray" when his white flash made another building burst into flames.

"The people I killed, I killed them because they wanted to take Monrovia," Ray said. "The people I killed - plenty-oh."

Many of the NPFL's young fighters, including Ray, will soon be taken back to Gbarnga, but for now Ray and his friends spend their days exploring what remains of Monrovia, walking through the refugee camps carrying radios instead of rocket launchers and being treated for the most part as heroes of war.

In Liberia and in Sierra Leone, Angola and Sudan, boys - and often girls - have been used by their elders to fight their countries' civil wars. The United Nations estimates there are 200,000 children bearing arms among some 25 nations currently at war.

In Sierra Leone, some 1,000 children last year were ordered to put down their guns and head to U.N.-sponsored camps for former child soldiers. In Liberia, the estimated 6,000 children soldiers under age 15 have few such options.

In a tiny Monrovia room turned into a makeshift movie theater, school-age children sit in rows watching a Charles Bronson video.

Among them is a small boy who calls himself Rambo Farley.

The same size as the other boys, Rambo acts older, leaning back in his chair, not throwing as much popcorn. Unlike the others, two days earlier Rambo was a fighter on the front line. Not much taller than the assault rifle he struggled to shoulder, the young Ulimo-J soldier says he is 16.

When the city exploded in early April, Rambo lived near the compound where those loyal to Ulimo-J leader Roosevelt Johnson took shelter. Rambo's parents fled the daily shelling of the compound, but Rambo stayed behind, was given a weapon, and followed older fighters every day to battle on the streets.

There is now an uncertain calm in Monrovia, but Rambo's parents have not returned and he remains here, relying on fellow rebels or displaced civilians to share food or floor space.

Squatting on the ground sharing a bowl of rice with the children of a civilian family, Rambo is unsure of his future, but knows he has few options.

"There's no school, man," he says. He nods towards his friends. "They don't go to school, and they don't even fight."

The people of Liberia are also uncertain of the long-term effects of a generation turned into killers by warlords, or of the immediate future of Monrovia.

"You know Liberia," said faction commander Roland Anderson.

"During war we prepare for peace. When the peace comes it's time to prepare for war."

Portugal keeps the corks popping

By Richard Waddington
Reuter

LISBON — Whether it be burgundy or Bulgarian, champagne or Chardonnay, the cork in the wine bottle is almost certainly Portuguese.

What Saudi Arabia is to oil or south Africa to diamonds, so Portugal is to the humbler cork, long favoured by wine-makers to help age and preserve the fruit of their labours.

Some 80 per cent of cork consumed in the world — whether in stopping wine or whisky, stuck on the sole of a shoe or covering the floor — pops out of Portugal.

The Portuguese grow some 50 per cent of the world's cork and the rest they import, mainly from neighbouring Spain and north Africa as raw material for the factories whose output earned the country $650 million in exports last year.

The warm, southwestern corner of Europe where the Atlantic meets the Mediterranean has always provided ideal growing conditions for the stunted cork oak trees.

The enterprise of the Portuguese has done the rest as they took advantage of the fact that their factories were close to the cork woodlands of the Extremadura and Andalusia, Spain's main growing areas.

With the lifting of customs duties between the two neighbours on their entry into the then European Community in 1986, Portugal was a more convenient destination for the bulky cork than the factories of Catalonia in Spain's northeast.

The cork is the gnarled bark of the tree, cut by expert hands every nine years and then stacked in piles in the fields to "settle" for a year before being transported to the industrial plants.

Nearly 60 per cent of all the cork exported from Portugal goes to the wine trade, with France being the largest single customer in terms of value, buying more than $134 million worth of corks in 1995.

In recent years there have been a number of attempts to float the idea of artificial corks, particularly plastic ones, as shippers experiment with alternatives.

It is partly a question of price but it has more to do with the fact that cork is not 100 per cent reliable as a sealer, particularly with poorer wines where a correspondingly lower quality of cork is used.

Shippers estimate that up to 10 per cent of such wine can become "corked", the musty and acrid taste that wine has when air has penetrated.

Britain's Marks Spencers retail chain, one of the country's largest wine sellers, uses plastic corks in 17 brands, mainly the cheaper ones, out of 250 offered by its stores.

"Plastic is definitely a more efficient way of sealing a wine," said one official from its wine importing department.

But he admitted wine drinkers were not fully convinced. "The general public prefer the traditional cork," he said.

One advantage of plastic corks is that wines do not need to be laid down. Usually, when wine is kept for any length of time it must be laid flat so that the cork is kept moist.

But a big marketing drawback is that when pulled, the plastic cork does not give the satisfying "pop" of the real thing. Nor can thrifty drinkers stuff it back into the bottle if all the wine is not consumed.

Natural corks for champagne come in five different standards, while there are six qualities of wine cork.

Some of the problem with "corked" wine comes from the mixing of different types which shippers request to keep costs down, industry sources said.

Despite the continuing search for alternatives and a decline in wine drinking in some European countries, Portugal's cork producers remain confident that their future is buoyant.

"You can never replace a natural product like cork," smiled Americo Amorim, known here as the "king of cork" because of the huge stake his family firm has in the business.

"It allows the wine to stay dozens of years in a bottle, retaining its perfume...For quality wine, anything but cork is unthinkable," he said.



Peasants peel the cork tree during the summer season on Alentejo in the south of Portugal (Reuter photo)

Plastic cork makers battle wine tradition

SEATTLE (R) — Wine lovers may sniff at the idea of plastic corks in their favourite Chardonnay, but the plugs produced by a Seattle-area company are now used by 100 wineries around the world.

Supreme Corq. Inc. of Kent, Washington, founded in 1992, is one of three manufacturers worldwide trying to buck tradition, which holds that bottles of fine wines must be stoppered by cork from the bark of trees grown in Spain, Portugal or North Africa.

The company's corks, made of the same high-quality plastic used in artificial heart valves, can be tinted to look like the real thing, but the brightly coloured versions, in shades like denim, forest green and Cabernet (a light red), are more popular.

"The colouring of the cork has really become a packaging item," says company President Jerry Zech. "The public likes the idea that you're not trying to look like a fake cork."

One California winery, Murphy-Goode Estate Winery, uses purple plastic corks to match its label.

While purists may prefer natural corks, they are increasingly expensive and vary in quality.

Poor-quality corks can crumble or permit leaks, and bacteria called trichloroanisole in a cork can ruin the whole bottle, giving it an unpleasant, musty odour compared to the smell of dirty sweat socks.

Such "corked" wine may cost wineries as much as $3 billion a year worldwide.

"The main advantage (of plastic corks) is that you can guarantee the quality of the wine in the bottle, which you can't do with a natural cork," says Chris Benz, a wine maker with Murphy-Goode.

Declasse jug wines with screw tops have made Supreme Corq's road to acceptance just that much bumpier, however.

"Tradition always comes up," said Mr. Zech. "But in my view, tradition is more an issue with wineries than it is with the consumer. ... Ninety-plus per cent of consumers are saying, 'bring it on'."

The jury is still out, however, on the delicate question of whether a fine wine needs to "breathe" though a natural cork as it ages. Some wineries reportedly are doing their own tests, the results of which will not be known for up to a decade.

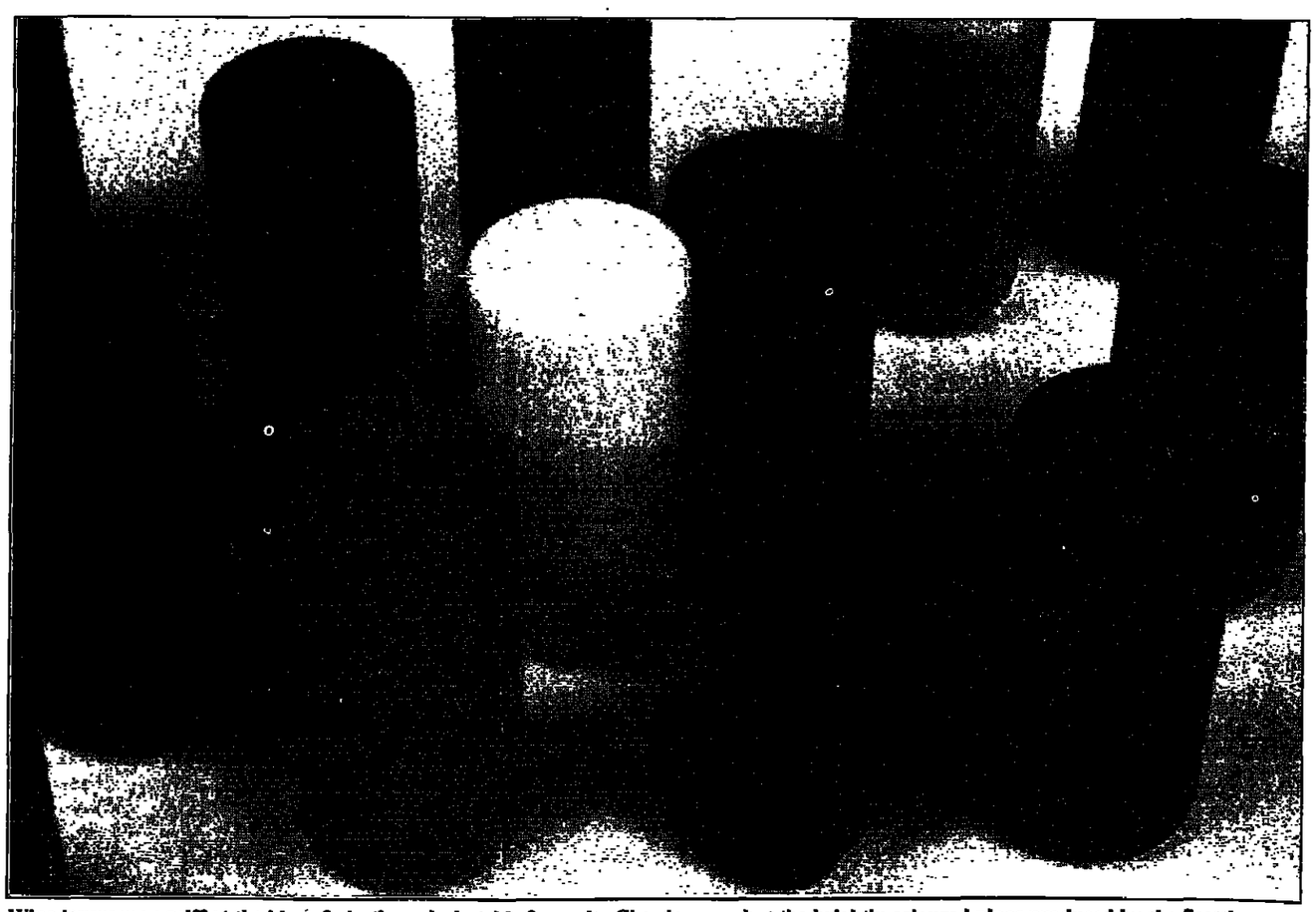
Supreme Corq's corks cost 10 to 14 cents each, depending on the size of the order, the colour and whether they include printing.

This is competitive with natural corks, which range from 5 cents for corks made from bits of natural cork compressed into shape to 50 cents and up for top-quality corks cut from the bark of trees 25 years old or more.

In general the international market, including what Mr. Zech calls the "new world wines" of Australia, South Africa and Chile, has been more receptive to plastic corks than wineries in Europe or the United States. Some 30 per cent of the company's volume is sold to wineries overseas.

Supreme Corq was founded by Seattle-area entrepreneur Dennis Burns, a man with a feel for plastic. He is the inventor of protec bike helmets and gargoyles sunglasses, the kind Arnold Schwarzenegger wore in the movie "The Terminator."

Mr. Zech declined to release sales figures for the privately held company.



Wine lovers may sniff at the idea of plastic corks in tehir favourite Chardonnay, but the brightly-coloured plugs produced by the Seattle-area company Supreme Corq. Inc. are now used by 100 wineries around the world (Reuter photo)

Winds of change overturn fortunes of supply ministry

By Samir Ghawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Former Minister of Supply Radi Ibrahim has said that the Ministry of Supply was generating profit since it was set up in 1974 until 1989 when JD 40 million of accumulated profit was transferred to the Ministry of Finance. He said in a lecture at the World Affairs Council Wednesday evening, the monetary and financial crisis in 1989 overturned the gains into losses, adding that prices of foodstuffs and fodder imported by the ministry doubled due to the 50 per cent loss in the value of the Jordanian dinar.

This currency devaluation was the beginning of a new problematic and tough period that saw the total deficit from subsidies reaching JD 500 million between 1989 and 1995. Most of the financing covering this deficit was in the form of loans or in-kind grants, Mr. Ibrahim said.

"We were buying our bread and fodder by borrowing and burdening future generations to provide a loaf of bread at one third of its cost and fodder at half price for all deserving and non-deserving the subsidies," the minister stressed.

According to Mr. Ibrahim, the loans were secured locally from the Jordan Islamic Bank whereas the in-kind grants were provided by the U.S. government under different assistance programmes. He emphasised that the American aid has largely contributed to lowering the subsidy cost and to providing free lines of credit as well as discounts to the government until the programmes expired and the U.S. began to cut back on subsidising wheat and other foodstuff exports.

Problems intensified when the policy of subsidy ran against the economic reform strategy that was adopted under the structural adjustment programme agreed with international agencies and creditors. But the situation remained somehow under control as the government tried to limit the subsidies to those who deserve it through the coupon system.

In this context, Mr. Ibrahim explained, the government also gradually raised the prices of some subsidised products such as bread, barley and corn until 1993 when the introduction of the sales tax pressured the council of ministers at the time to shelve further moves on the subsidy front.

In figures, the gradual reduction of subsidies was successful as the amount of subsidies dropped from JD 89 million in 1989 to JD 82 million in 1990 and further down to JD 65 million, JD 57 million, JD 56 million and JD 52 million in 1991 through 1994 for a total of JD 401 million.

Exploding international prices for wheat and other grains from mid 1995 caused the amount of subsidy to shoot back up to JD 96 million last year. Further price raises have left no room for the government but to press ahead with a programme to change the form of bread subsidy into a cash handout.

Mr. Ibrahim emphasised that the policy of providing subsidies and services at below cost prices and charges was no longer acceptable and no longer economically justified. However, he offered other alternatives to adjust bread prices in light of previous studies and methods that were successfully implemented in Syria, Egypt and Tunisia.

The former minister said two kinds of bread can be produced: The "public type" which carries high nutritional value but is unattractive in terms of appearance and frangibility and the "improved type" which should be sold at a higher price to compensate for the deficit in producing the other type. This method was successfully implemented in Syria and Egypt and expectations that demand would be high for the "public bread," which cost 50 per cent less than the "improved bread," were found to be exactly the opposite.

Another alternative suggested by the former minister was to raise the price of bread over various stages until it reaches the cost level. He noted that the cost of production during 1993 and 1994 was between 160 fils and 170 per kilogramme and, if international prices decline more this year, the cost could reach 200 fils instead of 250 fils in light of world prices.

Distribution of coupons was seen by Mr. Ibrahim as complicated, impractical and, above all, not acceptable to the people. He said such a method was tried in the region but the concerned governments were forced to withdraw the measure under massive public rejection.

The last alternative was the one adopted here by switching the method of subsidy into a cash handout. Mr. Ibrahim evaluated the new procedure and saw some inconvenience for some sectors of society to obtain the cash as well as some administrative complications on the government side. He noted that the subsidy of the loaf of bread has become a cash handout that translates into a financial expenditure in the budget. As such, he argued, the subsidy remains and the change was cosmical.

Furthermore, Mr. Ibrahim mentioned the psychological effect on the people as the price hike would be three-fold the current level in addition to the fact that poor or limited income people might spend the cash handout on other products or on a debt repayment and not necessarily on purchasing bread.

The audience joined in giving their comments over a wide range of measures to tackle the situation but the blame that was put on previous governments for not adjusting prices in the past was rejected by former Minister of Industry, Trade and Agriculture Bassam Saket.

Dr. Saket assured the audience that the problem of subsidies was always on the table for discussions by various governments but political, economic and social variables and conditions at various did not provide the right climate and opportunity to act.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Converse with persons today whose ideas are similar to your own and you can proceed with a new project. Be happy at home later tonight with your loved ones and you can have a pleasant evening in their company.
TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Be clever in handling all practical affairs today and you can make real progress towards gaining your desires. Enjoy something cultural later this evening, with your loved ones such as art and you can provide them with something special.
GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Many personal tasks can be handled on this day which have been put aside and most definitely have to be completed. This evening is not good for handling business affairs, so put them off for a more opportune time.
MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Handle intimate affairs today for which you have little time during the week. Please your mate by doing something quite special for him or her and the gesture will be greatly appreciated by some additional amount of affection.
LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Contact friends you would like to have in your life today and show that you truly do appreciate their generosity. Show how much you care for them later this evening in some special manner. Regain your energies.
VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You should today avoid expensive pleasure and put that money aside for a rainy day. After being with prominent persons, be poised and calm at home later tonight with your loved ones and have a pleasant evening.
LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Study every angle of that new interest today which fascinates you and you can make real progress. If a trip is in the offing this evening, plan it well and you can take your loved ones along for a good time.
SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Follow your intuition during the daytime today and you will discover that it is as good as ever. Do your mate a favour and you will get excellent result from the gesture. Drive carefully on the highway and avoid any accidents.
SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you discuss difficulties with fellow associates you can get valuable ideas which can be helpful on some current project. Enjoy your loved ones at home later this evening and you can have a fun time in their company.
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Study activities from a different angle today and they may become more profitable to you in the days ahead. Don't be forceful towards any bigwig or you could fined yourself in a great deal of difficulty and you will not be successful.
AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get your talents across to others wisely today and will receive much praise for any original thoughts. Be kind to a good friend in the evening after a busy day of business and social activities which you have completed.
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Keep poised at home if conditions are difficult and keep a calm head. Take a little walk later this evening with your mate and this will soothe your nerves so that you handle business deal for another week.
Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Clinton hails U.S. growth figures as best in 'a generation'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. economic growth figures released Thursday show "the strongest American economy in a generation," President Bill Clinton said, but his chief rival for the White House said there is nothing to crow about.

The U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) rose at an annual rate of 4.2 per cent in the second quarter, with inflation under control, according to a first estimate released by the Commerce Department.

The news prompted Mr. Clinton, just three months from the November elections, to take credit for what he called "growth without inflation."

Mr. Clinton said the data showed "strong growth, low inflation, new jobs, higher wages — the strongest American economy in a generation."

But his Republican rival, former Senate leader Bob Dole, derided the figures, saying that the voters had little confidence in the economy and that Mr. Clinton's remarks were a "slap in the face of the American taxpayer."

In a statement, Mr. Dole accused the president of crowing over "reigning over the first recovery since World War II to leave the American worker behind."

Analysts had expected a slower pace of growth at 3.9 per cent.

Dealers and analysts said the strong rise in GDP reflected a bounce-back from first-quarter growth that was slowed by bad weather and strikes. The good news on inflation was that prices rose a modest 1.8 per cent rise compared to 2.2 per cent last quarter.

The GDP estimate announced Thursday is the strongest registered since 1992.

But analysts were concerned about the future, which they said may not be as sunny as what was reflected in the day's economic data.

"There is no question that the best is behind" despite the low inflation, said Oppenheimer analyst Michael Metz.

Business investment, considered a precursor of future growth, slowed down to 0.5 per cent from 11.6 per cent.

"The best news on inflation is behind us," concurred John Lonski, chief economist with Moody's, stressing the healthy job market inevitably would send prices higher.

Laura Tyson, head of the National Economic Council, said the economy will remain "strong going through the rest of this year and into the future."

Ms. Tyson said there are no signs of underlying inflation pressures in the economy. She also noted that after years of decline, take-home pay finally appears to be running ahead of inflation.

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin said the economy is showing a "sustained rate of growth" with fluctuations from quarter to quarter.

He noted that if current economic strategy is maintained, "we have the opportunity to have good economic conditions for a long, long time."

On the job front, weekly first-time claims for unemployment were down 29,000 in the United States for the week ending July 27, the Labour Department said.

There were 292,000 claims, while analysts had expected demands to be up by 11,000. The figure for the preceding week was revised downward from 322,000 to 321,000.

Demand for unemployment benefits are at their lowest level since the week ending Feb. 4, 1989, when they were at 286,000.

New money holds key to development — Japan official

LYON (R) — New money is needed to help the world's poorest nations develop their economies but large-scale debt relief for them should be strictly conditional, a senior official of Japan's ministry of finance has said.

Large-scale debt relief should be granted only when recipient countries implement economic restructuring projects, the official told Reuters.

"But it must not be granted for a wrong reason such as budgetary constraints," he added.

"If we are to spend $100 million worth of taxpayers' money for the world's poor, we would like to do so in a productive manner that could prompt investment and help raise the living standard of recipient nations," the official said.

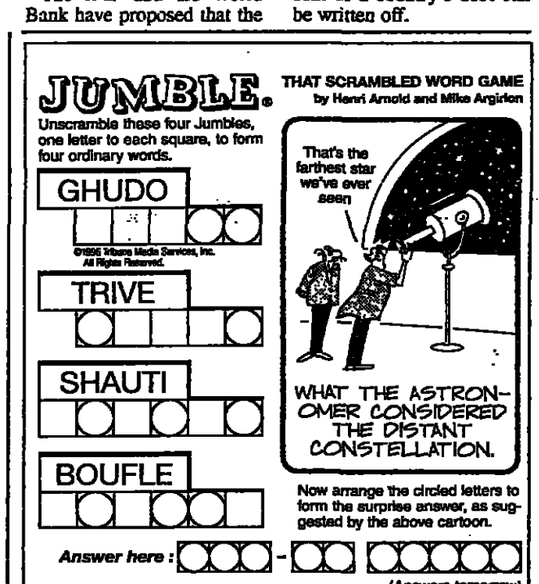
Japan's aid stance is shared by Germany but constrasts with that of the United States, Canada and Britain, which favour slashing debt rather than giving new money because of their budget difficulties.

The IMF and the World Bank have proposed that the Paris Club of creditor nations improve the terms of debt relief available to the world's poorest countries.

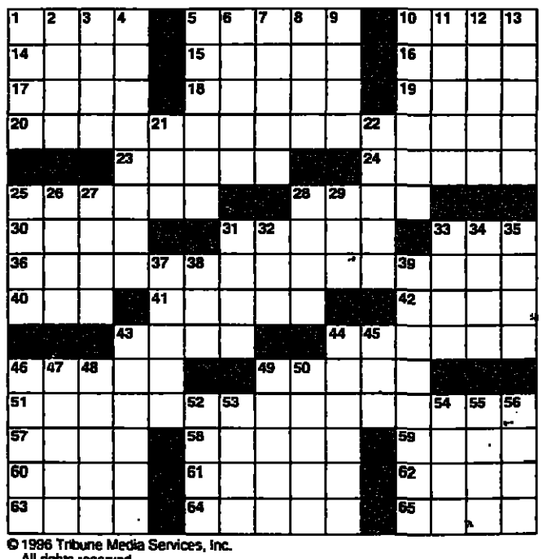
However, the Paris Club is only willing to do so if the IMF and the World Bank take action themselves to help these nations.

Under the Naples terms, the most generous terms of debt relief currently available to poor nations, up to 67 per cent of a country's debt can be written off.





THE Daily Crossword by Samuel K. Fliegner



ACROSS
1 Hurt (one's toe)
5 Penitents
10 Pierre is its cap.
14 A Turner
15 See 63A
16 Whodunits' Gardner
17 Of the ear
18 Turf, of a kind
19 Biblical outcast
20 Neglect purposefully
23 Oniony roll
24 I.Q. group
25 Clumsy guy
28 Diplomacy
30 Lendl of tennis
31 Steeple
33 Alter —
36 Scrutinize
40 Mrs. Eddie Cantor
41 Fully prepared
42 Liquid measure
43 Chess piece
44 Crab and granny
46 Orbit point
49 Viral disease, briefly
51 Spot fleetingly
57 Migration
58 Sao —
59 Run in neutral
60 Russian mountain range
61 U.S. statesman, Kefauver
62 Floor covering
63 WWII correspondent
64 Word with story and wave
65 Latin catch-all abbr.

DOWN
1 Convertiplane
2 Josip Broz
3 Pearly mussel
4 Spunk
5 Cardinal's symbol
6 An archangel
7 Legate
8 Public disturbance
9 Brother of 19A
10 Clandestine
11 Haggard-looking
12 A.k.a.
13 Nairobi country
21 Pedro's uncle
22 TV host
25 Chevalier/Caron musical
26 Zealous
27 Vesuvian emission
28 Diminutive
29 Circle segment
31 Penn or O'Casey
32 School of whales
33 Nefarious
34 Hereditary factor
35 Table scraps
37 Refuse
38 Chop
39 Vis-a-vis
43 Dilemma
44 Approximately
45 Squeak starter
46 Make a scene
47 Ward off
48 Embezzle
49 Disney character
50 OPEC vessel
52 "Planet of the —"
53 Deep wound
54 Revise
55 — podrida
56 Grope

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S	A	L	T	■	H	E	R	B	■	T	A	L	I	A
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W	A	Y	N	E	G	R	E	T	Z	K	Y	■	■	■
S	E	A	G	A	L	■	E	T	U	I	■	S	A	C
■	■	■	Y	V	E	S	■	■	N	E	S	T	L	E
F	A	D	■	E	R	I	C	L	I	N	D	R	O	S
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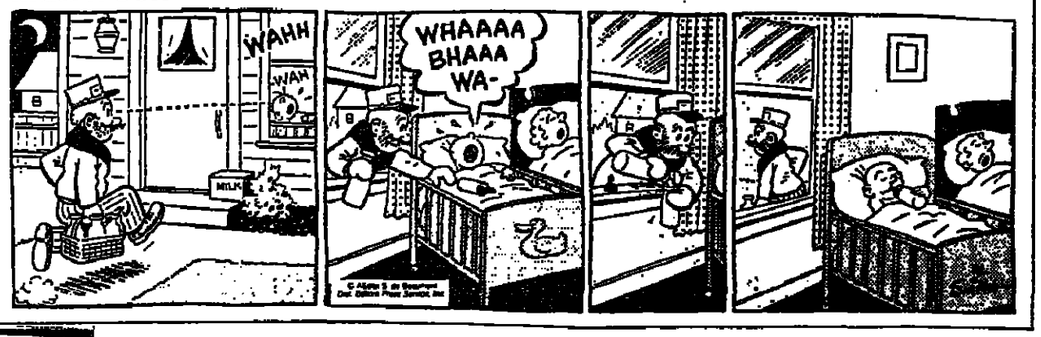
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1996

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (27/07/1996 - 31/07/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	No. OF CONTRACT	No. OF SHARES EXECUTED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	TURNOVER SHARES
221.000	213.000	ARAB BANK	11.9	1.67	91	1980	430955	219.00	220.00	215.50	216.75	- 2.25	217.654	.045
3.200	3.000	BANK OF JORDAN	10.9	0.00	9	12818	38579	3.02	3.01	3.01	3.01	.01	3.010	.122
1.020	.880	MID.EAST INV.BK.	55.7	0.00	57	40475	39778	.98	1.00	.94	1.00	+ .02	.983	.405
5.810	4.750	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	4.9	6.45	4	658	1416	2.19	2.16	2.15	2.16	- .03	2.152	.006
2.748	2.680	THE HOUSING BK.	11.9	3.10	8	1960	8859	4.79	4.65	4.45	4.45	- .34	4.520	.008
.970	.900	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	19.6	0.00	35	3681	9939	2.72	2.71	2.68	2.70	- .02	2.700	.037
3.600	3.600	JOR.GULF BANK	5.6	7.45	44	19516O	98878	.95	.96	.93	.94	- .01	.940	.526
3.780	3.520	ARAB JOR.INV.CO.	19.3	0.00	3	2550	9178	3.60	3.60	3.55	3.60	-	3.599	.026
1.800	1.700	JOR.ICELANIC BANK	17.0	0.00	32	6878	24394	3.60	3.60	3.52	3.54	- .06	3.547	.047
3.350	3.280	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	124.8	0.00	16	10402	10066	1.75	1.75	1.72	1.74	- .01	1.737	.116
2.460	2.340	JOR.INV.FIN.BANK	17.2	0.00	4	1721	5468	3.20	3.18	3.18	3.18	- .02	3.178	.017
.350	.300	BEIT.AL-MAL (BRITEA)	1.5	6.22	4	858	2049	2.39	2.41	2.41	2.41	+ .02	2.411	.043
1.170	1.020	AMMAN BANK INV.	-	0.00	69	65350	19719	.32	.34	.29	.29	- .03	.302	.435
		PHILADEL.INV.BK.	-	0.00	18	34480	38605	1.16	1.15	1.11	1.14	- .02	1.122	.345
BANKS SECTOR					328	288863	745963	INDEX NUMBER : 170.57				CHANGE :- 1.52%		
1.520	1.520	ARABIAN Sh.S INSUR.	10.6	5.21	1	250	360	1.52	1.44	1.44	1.44	- .08	1.440	.016
2.250	2.150	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	6.3	8.97	10	2000	4473	2.28	2.28	2.22	2.23	+ .03	2.237	.091
2.100	2.000	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	7.7	7.80	2	925	1896	2.10	2.05	2.05	2.05	- .05	2.050	.046
INSURANCE SECTOR					13	3175	6729	INDEX NUMBER : 123.02				CHANGE :- 0.37%		
1.560	1.460	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	10.4	8.00	91	59762	90577	1.51	1.52	1.50	1.50	- .01	1.516	.398
1.400	1.380	IRBID ELECTRICITY	8.8	7.81	3	250	338	1.38	1.35	1.35	1.35	- .03	1.352	.004
2.240	2.140	HIGHH MINERALS	11.9	5.79	3	450	1100	2.24	2.45	2.42	2.42	+ .08	2.444	.396
5.000	4.800	ARAB INTL.HOTELS	16.2	3.13	10	22950	115083	5.00	5.05	4.80	4.80	- .20	5.015	.298
2.290	2.090	SHIPPING LINES	8.3	9.89	5	1064	2342	2.17	2.20	2.20	2.20	+ .03	2.201	.015
1.300	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	14	3776	4451	1.24	1.20	1.17	1.18	- .06	1.179	.074
.780	.720	JORDAN INTL.TRAD.	14.1	0.00	4	5748	3944	.73	.69	.67	.67	.06	.686	.169
1.050	.960	ZARKA EDUCATION	-	0.00	18	8220	8226	1.00	1.01	1.00	1.00	-	1.001	.193
1.950	1.700	UNIFIED CO.	9.9	5.29	45	27680	52918	1.92	1.94	1.89	1.89	- .03	1.898	.552
1.000	.890	UNION LAND DEV.	-	0.00	6	1225	1139	.95	.95	.91	.92	- .03	.922	.025
SERVICES SECTOR					197	131095	279707	INDEX NUMBER : 111.05				CHANGE :- 1.25%		
1.250	1.210	ATTAHQEEN	-	0.00	1	1000	1210	1.21	1.21	1.21	1.21	-	1.210	.036
3.230	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	17.8	3.21	80	21832	66850	3.16	3.16	3.11	3.12	- .04	3.119	.835
2.900	2.750	JOR.PHOSPHATE MINES	28.8	0.00	3	329	911	2.85	2.80	2.77	2.77	- .08	2.769	.001
5.300	5.000	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.0	4.04	13	6610	32878	5.00	5.05	4.85	4.85	- .05	4.974	.008
9.250	8.720	JOR. PETROL.REFINERY	9.2	8.70	57	9659	89095	9.19	9.26	9.15	9.20	+ .01	9.224	.151
2.300	2.150	INDUSTRIAL COMM.AGR.	79.6	0.00	5	754	1652	2.18	2.20	2.19	2.20	+ .02	2.191	.015
4.700	4.420	JOR.WORSTED MILLS	8.8	3.65	11	3450	23973	6.70	7.10	6.85	6.85	+ .15	6.949	.086
3.550	3.100	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	18.4	5.57	44	15454	51704	3.43	3.38	3.33	3.35	- .08	3.346	.172
6.000	5.700	JOR.CERAMIC IND.	7.5	4.17	22	2862	16987	5.95	6.00	5.71	6.00	+ .05	5.935	.114
2.100	2.100	JORDAN DAIRY	12.9	7.14	7	961	1174	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	-	2.093	.032
3.200	3.150	JOR.PAPER CARDBD.	16.7	3.08	3	744	789	3.20	3.25	3.25	3.25	+ .05	3.234	.008
2.750	2.600	GENERAL MINING	7.2	10.71	1	250	700	2.75	2.80	2.80	2.80	+ .05	2.800	.025
1.520	1.400	RAFIA INDUSTRIES	179.7	0.00	3	1300	1832	1.49	1.42	1.40	1.42	- .07	1.409	.130
4.570	4.250	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	12.3	4.44	16	27090	121682	4.48	4.50	4.48	4.50	+ .02	4.492	.452
3.440	3.130	ARAB ALUM.IND.	8.3	8.96	9	2900	9602	3.40	3.35	3.28	3.35	- .05	3.311	.048
.550	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	-	0.00	66	87050	43371	.52	.53	.49	.50	- .02	.498	2.638
1.310	1.060	ARAB PAPER CONV.IND.	8.5	8.28	106	40328	50274	1.20	1.28	1.22	1.25	- .03	1.247	1.728
1.420	1.320	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	3	1100	1486	1.36	1.36	1.35	1.35	- .01	1.351	.028
.760	.660	NATIONAL INDS.	9.9	8.96	40	30700	20608	.69	.69	.67	.67	- .02	.671	.512
1.330	1.070	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	-	0.00	18	8350	9973	1.25	1.23	1.18	1.20	- .05	1.194	.209
1.090	1.040	JOR. WOOLWOOL INDS.	173.7	0.00	2	300	297	1.04	.99	.99	.99	- .05	.990	.010
2.790	2.660	UNIV.CHEM.INDS.	74.3	0.00	6	1600	4438	2.79	2.81	2.76	2.81	+ .02	2.774	.107
3.330	2.900	NATL.CABLE WIRE.MFAC	18.3	0.00	8	2593	7805	2.01	3.05	3.00	3.00	- .01	3.010	.052
.950	.830	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	-	0.00	15	3588	3513	.90	.95	.87	.89	- .01	.881	.100
1.550	1.220	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	27.1	0.00	29	9300	13557	1.46	1.47	1.44	1.45	.01	1.458	.186
1.250	1.170	RAMTHEN INVEST-	41.1	5.22	4	700	808	1.19	1.17	1.15	1.15	- .04	1.154	.035
1.980	1.760	UNIV. MOUN.INDS.	5.8	10.47	58	29550	55748	1.86	1.91	1.86	1.91	+ .05	1.887	.591
1.520	1.140	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	17.6	0.00	86	56000	94044	1.44	1.44	1.38	1.40	- .04	1.425	.825
1.090	.950	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	27.7	0.00	38	12584	12954	1.04	1.07	1.01	1.02	- .02	1.021	.159
1.810	1.780	EL -EAY READY WEAR	178.9	0.00	20	6000	11013	1.80	1.88	1.80	1.88	+ .08	1.836	.100
1.220	1.090	INTL. TOBACCO	27.8	0.00	122	83900	99537	1.17	1.21	1.17	1.18	+ .01	1.186	.839
1.200	1.130	UNION CH. & VEG.	28.6	0.00	17	5100	5877	1.17	1.17	1.14	1.16	- .01	1.152	.146
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR					912	483138	856337	INDEX NUMBER : 103.94				CHANGE :- 1.02%		
GRAND TOTAL					1450	906771	1888735	INDEX NUMBER : 136.83				CHANGE :- 1.29%		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
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PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (27/07/1996 - 31/07/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

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38.700	38.700	JOR TOURIST TRANS.CO	7.5	2.60	1	250	9625	38.70	38.50	38.50	38.50	- .20	38.500	.096
.610	.510	CENTRAL GEN.EXCHAGE	21.7	0.00	5	8845	5166	.57	.55	.54	.54	- .03	.542	.177
.670	.630	JOR.TRADE FAC.	16.5	0.00	26	12800	7944	.64	.64	.62	.62	- .02	.630	.200
.810	.540	NATL.COMMER.CENTERS	-	0.00	5	2100	1045	.54	.52	.47	.47	- .07	.498	.062
.660	.530	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	-	0.00	42	66520	39055	.60	.60	.55	.56	- .04	.587	.665
.750	.700	UNION INV. 50%	67.9	0.00	49	186880	38546	.72	.72	.70	.71	- .01	.206	.839
.650	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	-	0.00	3	1300	733	.58	.57	.56	.56	- .03	.564	.027
.990	.520	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	-	0.00	1	500	260	.55	.52	.52	.52	- .03	.520	.010
.650	.430	JOR.INDS.MARCH-JENCO	-	0.00	16	13850	5262	.43	.42	.38	.38	- .05	.387	.815
3.900	3.700	ARAB STEEL PIPES	10.2	6.27	1	150	599	3.90	3.99	3.99	3.99	+ .09	3.993	.003
1.800	1.370	NATL. CHLORINE	-	0.00	10	6380	9169	1.45	1.45	1.44	1.44	- .01	1.444	.088
.590	.550	NATL. TEXTILE	-	0.00	1	100	54	.56	.54	.54	.54	- .02	.540	.004
.690	.450	ARAB4 DIES & MOULDG	-	0.00	2	600	282	.49	.47	.47	.47	- .02	.470	.040
.650	.620	MIDEAST PHARM. 75%	-	0.00	20	13500	5140	.63	.64	.63	.63	-	.381	.142
.850	.770	JORDAN STEEL	-	0.00	32	17315	13861	.81	.81	.78	.80	- .01	.801	.215
GRAND TOTAL					594	426626	380976							

DAILY BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

New drive aims at unifying pension, social security funds

TO IMPLEMENT a World Bank recommendation calling for the unification of social security and pension regulations, Jordan plans to find some sort of a link between the two entities so as, starting January 1997, employees will not be able to benefit from both sides. A meeting that will group officials from the Social Security Corporation, the ministries of finance and administrative development and the Civil Service Commission will be held soon to discuss the plan. At present, there are two major funds: A pension fund for the public sector and a social security funds for both public and private sectors. The overlap resulted from the shift at the beginning of the year whereby new appointments in government institutions were subjected to social security entitlements and not those of the pension as the case has been in the past.

Abdullah Olayyan, president of the Civil Service Commission, stressed the importance of unifying these two funds noting that if such a target could not be attained, there must be channels to link them. He indicated that any amendments on the laws of civil and military pensions and social security should not be considered from a separate perspective. Mr. Olayyan saw this proposal as a "precious" opportunity for the concerned parties to seize and approve especially as many state institutions would be subject to privatisation.

He emphasised that there should be one procedure to follow in dealing with employees and that, upon specifying a single party for this task, decisions to grant some privileges should be taken into consideration such as reducing the rate of salary deductions.

In a memorandum to the minister of finance, Mr. Olayyan stressed three main issues needing studies — the ideal size of the general administration and the mechanism that should be adopted upon preparing staffing lists, the policies of appointments and their effects on the budget and the adoption of a strict measure on the retirement issue such as age, calculation of pension and other related matters (Al Ra'i).

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 2/08/96 19:36

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.4770	0.6481	1.2027	106.92	1.3740	1618.40	1.8560	5.0160
DM Mark	0.6770	-	0.4388	0.8142	72.39	0.9302	1095.75	1.2564	3.3960
GB Sterling	1.5430	1.5430	-	1.8559	164.89	2.1201	2342.89	2.5552	7.7387
CH Franc	0.8315	1.2276	0.5388	-	88.87	1.1430	1291.75	1.5748	4.2560
JP Yen	0.0094	1.3808	0.6055	1.1243	-	1.2850	14.19	154.81	4.6892
CA Dollar	0.7278	1.0752	0.4682	0.8697	1.29	-	1112.60	1.2116	3.6530
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9716	0.4261	0.0791	1422.48	0.9044	-	10.90	3.3002
NL Guilder	0.0608	0.8114	0.3909	72.59	6.54	0.8256	918.35	-	2.8272
FR Franc	0.1994	0.2943	0.1291	23.9677	21.29	0.2739	33.00	33.0000	-

Energy

Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	19.75	20.05
WTexas	20.80	20.90
Bony	19.75	20.05
Dubai	17.30	17.80
UL Gas	196.00	196.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.3940	0.17281	0.32088	28.5233
AE Dirham	0.2725	0.40257	0.17648	0.32772	29.1316
KW Dinar	3.3458	4.94315	2.16826	4.02576	357.91
BH Dinar	2.7776	4.1035	1.7991	3.34083	297.05
CY Pound	2.17	3.2051	1.4054	2.6099	232.016

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	116.42	Spot
Cocoa ($/ton)	1393	Spot
Sugar ($/ton)	374	Spot
Wheat ($/ton)	198	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	23.82	Spot
Tea (cts/kg)	108	Spot
Barley ($/bsh)	3.55	Spot
Rice ($/ton)	425	Spot

*** JOD Cross Rates**

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1001	1.1066
DE Mark	0.48	0.4824
CH Franc	0.5899	0.5928
FR Franc	0.1414	0.1421
JP Yen	0.6605	0.6636
NL Guilder	0.4279	0.43
IT Lira	0.0468	0.0468

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

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Michael Johnson carries all before him

ATLANTA (R) — Michael Johnson dwarfed each and every other sporting achievement at the Atlanta games when he pulverised the world 200 metres record Thursday.

The American, upstaging all the superlatives and media hype of an Olympics designed to showcase his exploits, exploded with super-human power on the track to clock 19.32 seconds, hacking 0.34 of a second off his own world record.

Johnson, who roared like a raging lion after the race as he recognised the enormity of his feat, completed an unprecedented 200 and 400 metres golden double to send 80,000 fans at the Olympic Stadium delirious with joy.

It was probably the most stunning achievement at an Olympics since long jumper Bob Beamon's leap into the next century at the Mexico Games in 1968 when he added more than half a metre to the world record.

Johnson certainly overshadowed some other great feats on a glorious night of athletics with Marie-Joe Perec pulling off the same 200-400 double in the women's events and Dan O'Brien triumphing in the decathlon.

The American sprinter ran an almost perfect race, though he confessed he stumbled out of the blocks and felt a twinge in his hamstring in the last five metres.

Ultimately, Johnson had the greatest silver medallist of all, Frankie Fredericks, to thank.

The Namibian set a blistering pace in the bend for Johnson, running inside him, to chase and the runner with the golden shoes took over on the straight to blast away as if rocket-propelled.

Fredericks finished in 19.68, the third fastest time run, and added a silver medal to the one he won in the 100 metres final — and to the two he won in the same events four years ago in Barcelona.

Young Trinidadian Ato Boldon took bronze in 19.80 and bowed down to Johnson after the race as if worshipping a God — or at least a super-human.

Boldon, who also won bronze in the 100 metres when Canada's Donovan Bailey set a world record, said at the medallists' news conference: "No disrespect to my friend Donovan Bailey but I think the fastest man in the world is sitting next to me."

Johnson, whose second 100 metres in the final was clocked at 9.20, was as stunned as anyone.

"I raced like everyone out there was capable of 19.5 or 19.4 so I did 19.3," he said. "I was shocked. That's what happens when you want something so bad."

By contrast France's Perec was subdued after her breathtaking victory in the women's 200 metres final.

Perec ran the 200 almost as an afterthought following her one-lap gold medal but hit such a peak of excellence she beat the sentimental favourite Merlene Ottey of Jamaica.

Ottey, 36 and racing in her fifth and last Olympics, won her sixth medal but none of them have been gold.

She was well in front coming out of the bend but Perec, showing something of Johnson's acceleration up the straight, flowed past her to win in the last 20 metres, clocking 22.12 to 22.24 for the Jamaican.

"When I saw the finish I was very happy but at the same time I was a bit sad," she said. "I admire Merlene a lot. I wasn't over-happy about beating her."

Ottey was gracious as ever in defeat, though she must have felt shattered after losing the 100 metres, too, to American Gail Devers in a photo-finish.

"At this age I think two races back-to-back is too much," she said. "I felt a bit tired out there but I'm not too disappointed. I did my best."

O'Brien, world record holder and three times world champion, was in Atlanta to bury the disappointment of not winning the Olympic gold four years ago when he failed to qualify for the U.S. team because he could not clear a height in the pole vault at the trials.

This time there were no mistakes. Leading overnight by 124 points, O'Brien performed consistently all day and sealed his victory with a personal best in the penultimate event, throwing the javelin 66.90 metres.

He finished with 8,824 points, just 67 outside his world record and 118 ahead of German silver medallist Frank Busemann.

The other gold medal of the day served only to intensify the euphoric atmosphere at the Olympic Stadium as Atlanta-based Derrick Adkins won the men's 400 metres hurdles in style, defeating his arch-rival Samuel Matete of Zambia.

Amid the triumphs there were personal tragedies, too.

Defending Olympic women's 1,500 metres champion Hassiba Boulmerka of Algeria left the stadium in tears after an unintentional clash with Romanian Gabriela Szabo bundled her out of the qualifiers.

"It was nobody's fault," said her coach. "It just shows she is human, after all."

It's only Michael Johnson who isn't.



Michael Johnson of the United States goes through the turn during the men's 200 metre final on Aug. 1 at the Olympic Stadium in Atlanta. Johnson won the race for the gold medal breaking his own world record with a time of 19.32 (Reuter photo)



France's Marie-Jose Perec smiles and waves with her gold medal around her neck after she won the final of the women's 200-metre race on Aug. 1 at the Olympic stadium in Atlanta during the Summer Olympics. Perec won the race with a time of 22.12 (Reuter photo)

OLYMPICS MEDALS TABLE

Olympics medals table after the 13th day of competition.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze
USA	27	30	15
Russia	21	16	9
China	15	16	10
France	13	6	14
Germany	11	12	20
Italy	11	6	9
Australia	7	9	18
Poland	6	5	3
Ukraine	6	2	7
S. Korea	4	7	4
Romania	4	5	6
Hungary	4	3	6
Greece	4	3	0
Switzerland	4	1	0
Cuba	3	5	8
Japan	3	4	3
Brazil	3	2	5
N. Zealand	3	2	1
Ireland	3	0	1
Turkey	3	0	1
Canada	2	8	7
Netherlands	2	4	8
Kazakhstan	2	3	1
Belgium	2	2	2
N. Korea	2	1	2
Spain	2	1	2
Denmark	2	1	1
S Africa	2	1	1
Ethiopia	2	0	0
Belarus	1	5	8
Britain	1	4	6
Czech Rep.	1	2	2
Sweden	1	2	1
Finland	1	2	0
Jamaica	1	2	0
Norway	1	1	2
Armenia	1	1	0
Indonesia	1	0	1
Slovakia	1	0	1
Yugoslavia	1	0	1
Costa Rica	1	0	0
Ecuador	1	0	0
Hong Kong	1	0	0
Syria	1	0	0
Bulgaria	0	4	4
Kenya	0	2	1
Slovenia	0	2	0
Austria	0	1	1
Iran	0	1	1
Argentina	0	1	0
Taiwan	0	1	0
Croatia	0	1	0
Malaysia	0	1	0
Namibia	0	1	0
Uzbekistan	0	1	0
Georgia	0	0	1
Israel	0	0	1
Mexico	0	0	1
Mongolia	0	0	1
Morocco	0	0	1
Mozambique	0	0	1
Nigeria	0	0	1
Moldova	0	0	1
Trinidad	0	0	1
Uganda	0	0	1

Russians fear more drug cases

ATLANTA (AFP) — Russian team chief Anatoly Kolesov fears more of the country's medal winners at the Atlanta Olympics could be disqualified for using the banned drug Bromantan.

"We believed this was a legal drug," explained Kolesov.

"Athletes take vitamins and proteins and we thought this drug fitted into that category. It is intended to protect the body's immune system. High-intensity training leaves athletes exposed to all sorts of viruses," he told AFP.

Four Russian athletes have been thrown out of the games for taking the drug, including two medal winners.

Kolesov insisted that the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Medical Commission had been notified by the Russians about the drug.

"We sent them a description of the drugs two years ago," he said. "We didn't get a reply so we assumed it was safe."

However IOC medical director Dr. Patrick Schamasch denied the Russian National Olympic Committee had contacted them about Bromantan.

"As far as I know we received no information on that issue," he said.

"But the medical staff of every Olympic delegation knows that the list of banned substances only contains some examples. The key word is related compounds. Doctors know what this means," he told AFP.

He added if the list of banned substances was closed they would always be chasing the drugs cheats.

"It would take a year to add newly-discovered products to the list of banned substances," he said.

While the Russians continue to insist the drug is simply an aid to help athletes fight off possible viruses the IOC describe it as a cocktail of steroids, stimulants and masking agents.

Shortly before the games began IOC Medical Commission head Prince Alexandre De Merod warned that it may not be possible to detect Bromantan but, with the aid of a Canadian lab, they found they could.

Israil Arsamakov, president of the Russian Weightlifting Federation, which dropped European Champion Yuri Myshkovets when he failed a drugs test at training camp, denied systematic doping existed in Russia.

"It's not like in the old Soviet days," said the 1988 Olympic champion.

"But there are many ways for drugs to travel, both inside Russia and in the rest of the world. There are all sorts of ways for athletes to obtain drugs."

The Russian Olympic Committee is contesting the decision to strip Andrei Korneyev of his men's 200m breaststroke bronze medal and Zafar Guleyev of his 48kg Greco-Roman wrestling bronze.

Marina Tradenkova, fifth in the women's 100 metres, and Nina Zhuvaniskia, last in the 200m backstroke swimming final, also tested positive for the drug.

A Russian doctor for the Lithuanian team and a Belarus-origin cycling coach for the Lithuanians have also been expelled after Lithuanian track cyclist Rita Razmaite also tested positive for the drug.

The Court of Sports Arbitration has started hearing the appeal over the first Russians who tested positive in Atlanta but a result could take several days.

JTV's Olympic coverage on Channel 2 for Saturday

Cycling men's time trial finals	15:25 - 20:25
Canoeing finals	15:55 - 18:55
Equestrian	15:55 - 19:00
Rhythmic gymnastics	16:55 - 19:50
Tennis men's singles final	19:25 - 22:45
Boxing finals	20:25 - 23:00
Cycling final	20:55 - 22:35
Volleyball ladies final	21:20 - 23:4
Football men's final	22:35 - 01:00
Tennis ladies doubles final	22:55 - 01:15
Handball final	00:05 - 01:55
Athletics 9 finals	01:20 - 05:45
Basketball men's final	04:50 - 07:00

Olympics schedule

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3

ATHLETICS

Women's high jump, finals
Men's javelin, finals
Women's 400 relay, finals
Men's 400 relay, finals
Women's 1,500, finals
Men's 1,500 finals
Men's 5,000, finals
Women's 1,600 relay, finals
Men's 1,600 relay, finals

BASKETBALL

Women's 11th to 9th place
Men's gold and bronze medal

BOXING

Light flyweight, bantamweight, lightweight, welterweight, middleweight, heavyweight finals

CANOE-KAYAK

1,000 finals, Men's kayak single, double and fours, men's canoe singles and doubles; 500 finals, Women's kayak fours

CYCLING-ROAD

Men's and Women's individual time trial finals

EQUESTRIAN

Open individual dressage freestyle finals

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

Individual semifinals

SOCCER

Men's gold medal match

TEAM HANDBALL

Women's gold and bronze medal matches

TENNIS

Men's singles gold and bronze medal matches, Women's doubles gold medal

VOLLEYBALL

Women's gold and bronze medal matches

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(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
Toy Story
5:00 p.m

CINEMA CONCORD TEL: 677420
CONCORD "1"
Jim Carrey & Jeff Daniels
Dumb and Dumber
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30,10:30
CONCORD "2"
BRAVEHEART
Shows: 3:00, 6:00, 9:00

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S MEDALS TABL

als table after the 13th da competition.

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1 1 6
5 1 6
3 2 7
1 1 2
1 2 5

Savon walks into boxing final

ATLANTA (R) — Reigning champion Felix Savon of Cuba walked through to the Olympic heavyweight final without throwing a punch Thursday after his German semifinal opponent Luan Krasniqi failed to show up.

Krasniqi had an injured hand and a cut under his eye and did not turn out for the weigh-in earlier. He still wins a bronze medal as a losing semifinalist.

Savon, five times a world champion and unbeaten for 10 years in international competition, now meets Canada's David Defiagbon for the gold medal Saturday.

The Canadian, who beat Nate Jones of the United States 16-10 to advance, said he was not worried about Savon getting a walkover and being fresher for the final.

Savon's semifinal would have been a highlight of the night but instead the fans, who were not told in advance of the walkover, watched disappointedly as he stood in the ring waiting for an opponent he knew was not coming.

Defiagbon, who reached the semifinals after French heavyweight Christophe Mendy was disqualified for hitting him with a low blow, was clearly tiring against Jones after staggering the American in the first round.

"I think that the fight today showed that I deserve to be in the final," Defiagbon declared.

Jones agreed that the Canadian deserved to win.

His mother, who had not watched him fight since he was eight years old, witnessed the defeat.

Defiagbon's win sealed a disappointing night for the host nation, with three defeats in three fights.

Two more U.S. fighters compete Friday.

The Cubans, who were rocked by two stunning defeats Wednesday, hit back with four wins out of four. They also have three other fighters in Friday's semifinals.

Apart from Jones, lightweight Terrance Cauthen and middleweight Roshii Wells were both outpointed.

Cauthen, trained by former heavyweight champion Joe Frazier's son Marvis, was beaten 15-12 by Tontcho Tontchev, one of two Bulgarians to win through.

Wells, an Atlanta local, was completely outclassed 17-8 by Cuba's Olympic and world champion Ariel Hernandez.

Wells could not argue about the result but Cauthen clearly thought he should have won more than a bronze.

"If I thought that he'd beaten me I'd take it like a man and say he was the better fighter," said Cauthen, who was behind 3-1 after the first round and never caught up.

Cauthen's disappointment was nothing compared to that of bantamweight world champion Raimkul Malekhbekov.

The Russian battled back from 10-3 down in the second round to level the scores with 35 seconds of the fight remaining against Cuba's Arnaldo Mesa. He then lost out on a tiebreak 75-73, the closest of the tournament so far.

Mesa had never intended to box at the Olympics as a bantamweight but moved down a weight after reigning Olympic champion Joel Casamayor defected in June.

The Cuban's opponent for the gold will be Hungarian Istvan Kovacs, a 1992 bronze medallist.

Welterweight Juan Hernandez beat Romania's Marian Simion 20-7 to meet Russia's Oleg Saitov in the final.

Light-flyweight Mansueto Velasco outpointed Spain's Rafael Lozano 22-10 to become the Philippines' first finalist since featherweight Anthony Villanueva won silver in 1964.



Bulgarian boxer Tonto Tontchev falls to his knees after beating the United State's Terrance Cauthen in their 60kg semifinal boxing match on Aug. 1 (Reuter photo)



The USA's Charles Barkley slam dunks against Australia during semifinal play on Aug. 1 at the Georgia Dome. The U.S. won the match 101-73 (Reuter photo)

Dream Team answers challenge to reach final

ATLANTA (AFP) — Dream Team III answered their toughest challenge of the Olympics here Thursday, subduing spirited Australia to reach a gold-medal showdown with fellow unbeaten Yugoslavia.

Charles Barkley scored 24 points and pulled down 11 rebounds to lead the United States collection of National Basketball Association stars past Australia 101-73.

"We had to compete. We had to play hard," Barkley said. "This is the best team we have played in the tournament from a cohesion and heart standpoint. They played their butts off. They pushed us."

The Dream Team's only remaining obstacles are the reigning European champions, who beat Lithuania 66-58 in a rematch of last year's European final.

"I think we deserve it," said Vlade Divac, a Yugoslavian NBA forward. "We are unbeaten. We have played the best outside of the Dream Team. We will have the chance to see how we stand up to the Dream Team.

"We're not going to play just for showtime in the final. If they are better, they will beat us. But they will have to show up. We're not going to give up."

Australia, whose best Olympic finish was fourth in 1988, settled for a bronze medal matchup against the club that won the 1992 bronze, Lithuania.

The Aussies could only imagine what might have happened had centre Luc Longley, a starter for the NBA champion Chicago Bulls, not been sidelined after ankle surgery following the playoffs.

"With Luc having the NBA experience, it would help a lot," said Aussie guard Shane Heal, who had 19 points. "It would help us make more of a step."

Heal and Andrew Gaze staged an impressive three-point shooting exhibition in the first 12 minutes to put Australia ahead 34-30 before the U.S. team ended the first half with a 21-7 run and a 51-41 lead.

"What Andrew did was phenomenal. I was simply amazed," said Heal, who tries out for the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves starting Sunday.

"When you consider what we were up against, we did a good job," said Gaze, who had 21 points in the first half but was kept to four in the second half by the U.S. defence.

"Reggie did a great job fighting through screens to guard him in the second half," U.S. coach Lenny Wilkens said.

China's Fu conquers new realms in diving

ATLANTA (R) — Fu Mingxia, world highboard diving champion as a tiny 12-year-old, extended her empire to the springboard to achieve an elusive Olympic golden double at the Atlanta games.

Dedicated to sport since childhood and still two weeks short of her 18th birthday, China's Fu has crammed a wealth of achievement into her young life with two world crowns and three Olympic titles already in her possession.

Consistency derived from that dedication, allied with coolness under pressure when all around her buckled, enabled Fu to score an unexpectedly comprehensive triumph in Wednesday's three-metre springboard final.

Despite bouts of fever and an eye problem after her arrival in Atlanta, anything less than victory in Saturday's highboard final would have been, in contrast to the springboard, a major upset. Fu, world champion on the 10-metre board in 1991 and 1994, duly repeated her 1992 Olympic triumph with ease.

She is the first woman since American Pat McCormack in 1956 to retain her Olympic highboard diving title and the first since East German Ingrid Kraemer in 1960 to sweep both women's diving golds.

Introduced to gymnastics at the age of three, Fu started diving at seven and was later sent from home in Wuhan in Hubei province to a sports school where daily hours of training honed her skills and turned her into a world-beating prodigy.

The fearless little waif-like girl who entranced fans with her twirling artistry from the 10-metre board at the 1991 Perth World Championships and 1992 Barcelona Olympics has grown into a chunkier competitor at 1.58 metres in height and 57 kilogrammes in weight.

"In 1992 I was a little girl. I grew a lot in four years — taller and heavier — but I can work on other strategies and technical aspects to keep up, so I feel it doesn't have much impact on my performance," she said.

"After Barcelona, my coach wanted me to do three-metre and platform here. I won the gold medals and I feel very relieved because I reached the goals set by my coach and me."

Fu has made huge progress on the springboard from finishing 25th at the 1994 World Championships to winning the World Cup in 1995 and now the Olympic title, having beaten her nearest rival in Atlanta by a vast margin of more than 35 points.

"I think my performance was pretty consistent. It was not my best but I did not make major mistakes. My competitors did make mistakes so I won the gold medal," she said.

"In the past five years I have some failures and some successes, some ups and downs. I've gained a lot in experience."

In Atlanta, Fu shouldered China's enormous expectations alone after 14-year-old Guo Jingjing faltered in the highboard final and world champion Tan Shuping was surprisingly eliminated in the preliminary round of the three-metre event.

But she did not let that affect her. "I do not concentrate on her performances, I concentrate on mine," she said after Guo dropped out of the reckoning.

Fu believes the key to her success in Atlanta lay in her technical skills.

"I performed consistently," she said. "I was also well prepared psychologically. I was not very uptight or intense. I did not say 'I have to win the gold'. I just concentrated on each dive."

Agassi on brink of cherished gold

ATLANTA (R) — Andre Agassi moved ever closer to an Olympic gold medal Thursday and insisted this weekend's final against Spain's Sergi Bruguera would rank alongside the biggest moments of his life.

The Las Vegan saw off the unconventional challenge of India's Leander Paes 7-6 6-3 in the semifinals and is ignoring all other distractions to ensure he adds his name to the lengthening list of U.S. champions at the Atlanta games.

"This is a huge match on Saturday. It's as big a match as playing any Grand Slam final," said Agassi, forced to save two set points at 6-5 in the first set before subduing the 127th-ranked Paes.

"It would be unbelievable to win a gold medal. I couldn't put into words what it would mean to do it for the United States... seeing the number of medals go up and knowing you were a part of it.

"You strive to get closer to what you hope to be the ultimate prize and Saturday is what it boils down to."

Only the French Open amongst the four 'majors' has so far eluded the 26-year-old, but even an Olympic silver medal will find a prominent place in the Agassi trophy room.

"If the silver medal is a disappointment, you're an asshole," he said succinctly. "That's ridiculous. To have a medal, period, is something every athlete comes here for.

"When all is said and done, you accept a beautiful reward, regardless if it's gold or silver. Certainly the gold is a greater accomplishment, but a silver is a wonderful thing."

Agassi, who has steadfastly stayed away from the party zone in downtown Atlanta, has enjoyed a good record on hard courts against Bruguera whose best moments have all come on European clay.

British athlete receives racist letter

LONDON (AFP) — British triple jumper Michelle Griffith revealed Friday she was sent a race hate letter at the Atlanta Olympics.

She was handed the letter just hours after competing in her heats at the games. In the letter there was an insult relating to her colour and the writer said she was not fit to represent Britain in the Olympics.

Michelle, 24, said: "I can't believe this sick person has sent such a hurtful letter. I got it just after I had jumped and I only thank God it wasn't before.

"I know they are from Slough because of the postmark but the coward would not leave a name or address. I have never encountered racism before in all my years and it really hurts."

The athlete, who belongs to Windsor, Slough and Eton Athletics Club, said the letter was a reply to a view in her Olympic column printed in a local newspaper.

In the article she said the British team "did not give a damn" about drug taking by foreign athletes.

Michelle, who competed unsuccessfully in Monday's triple jump qualifiers, said: "The person wrote that even Australians were more British than I am. Well I can tell you I'm proud to be British and black British at that."

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan announces that it will call for applications for the licence for a second national operator of paging services. The new service operator will compete with the existing licensee, Jordan Radio Paging (JRP).

The TRC issued a Public Notice Aug. 1 (TRC Notice 1996-1), which begins a formal consultative dialogue between the TRC and interested parties on the approach that should be used to license the new service. The Notice also describes the Commission's preliminary approach to the licensing of the second paging operator. A copy of the Notice may be obtained from the TRC.

Parties interested in the new licence to provide the new paging service are requested to file expressions of interest and their comments on the TRC's preliminary approach. Comments must be received no later than Aug. 14. The TRC will review the comments and intends to issue a formal Call for Applications (Tender) in late Aug. or early September.

For a copy of TRC Notice 1996-1, contact: The Office of the Director General
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P.O. Box 850967, Amman 11185, Jordan
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Poll shows Israelis approve of killing of hostage takers

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A majority of Israelis approve of the 1984 slaying of two Palestinian hostage-takers by an agent of Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security service, according to a poll published Friday.

Fifty-five per cent of those questioned in the Smith Institute poll taken this week say the summary killing of the two Palestinians captured after they hijacked a bus was justified.

Thirty-six per cent of the respondents condemned the act, but only 21 per cent said the Shin Bet agent should be tried in court.

Nine per cent said they had no opinion.

The agent, Ehud Yatom, who is retiring from the Shin Bet after 24 years' service, revealed in a newspaper interview last week that he killed in cold blood two Palestinians on the order of his chief.

The two Palestinians, along with two others, hijacked a bus as it left Tel Aviv April 12, 1984, taking 40 passengers hostage.

They were captured alive after Israeli commandos stormed the bus near the Egyptian border while their two accomplices were killed on the spot.

The poll of 500 people had a margin of error of 4 per cent.

Meanwhile, the head of the Shin Bet criticised Yatom who had sparked an uproar in Israel with his admission that he killed the two Palestinian bus hijackers.

The Yatom case was discussed Friday during the weekly cabinet meeting. Shin Bet chief Ami Ayalon told the ministers that the agency "operates in order to prevent terror attacks and does not partake in punishing terrorists."

Ayalon's remarks were carried in a cabinet statement.

The aftermath of the April 1984 hijacking of bus No. 300 from Tel Aviv to the Gaza Strip and attempts to cover up the hijackers' deaths shook up the Shin Bet, prompting the first public debate on its wide-ranging powers.

The Shin Bet initially claimed the two were killed when the bus was stormed. However, the Israeli Hadashot newspaper soon published photographs of Majid Abu Juma, 17, and his cousin Subhi Abu Juma, 18, alive and in custody.

A 1986 government report found that then-Shin Bet chief Avraham Shalom had ordered the two men killed, but by then Shalom and 10 other agents, including Yatom, had requested and received a pardon from then-President Haim Herzog.

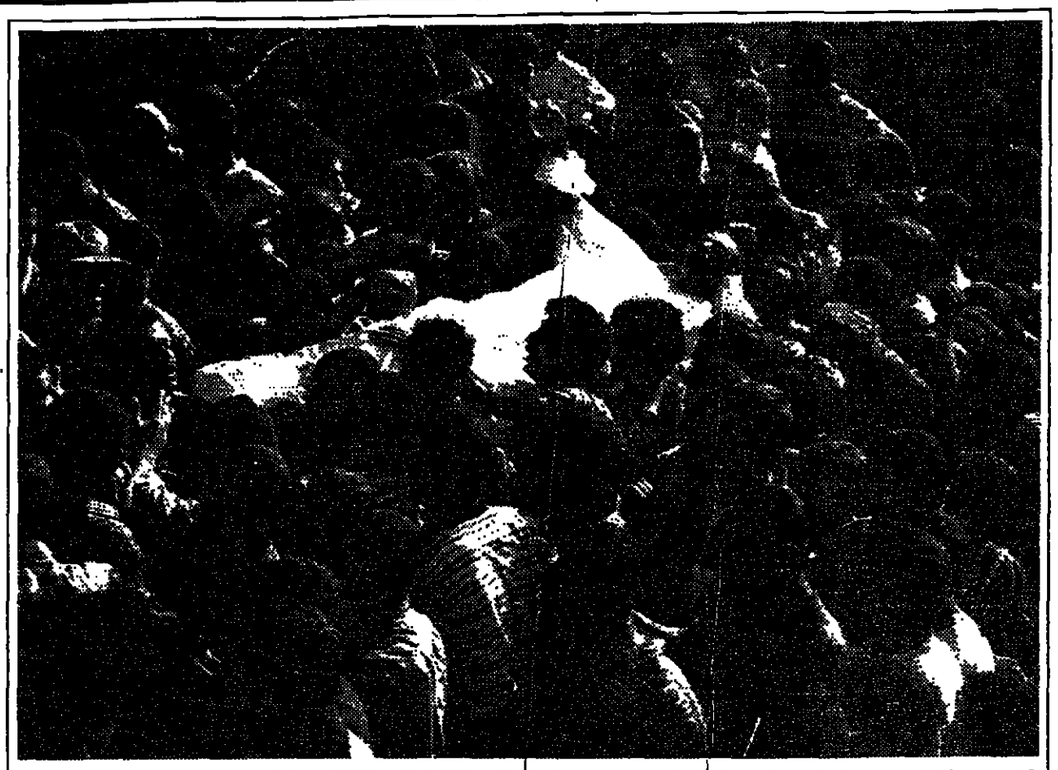
At the time, Shalom said then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had given him blanket permission to kill captured terrorists in certain situations.

Yatom's interview in the Yediot Ahronot newspaper last month in which he revealed the killings was the first time an individual involved in the deaths came forward and disclosed details of the killings.

Yatom, 48, said the hijackers were badly beaten by soldiers, Shin Bet agents and civilians before he got instructions from Shalom to kill them.

Yatom said in the interview that other agents involved had lied about the incident.

Ayalon said Friday that such behaviour violated Shin Bet practices. "In every situation where agents appear at an inquiry, court, parliament or any other forum, they are instructed to tell the truth only and I know that they do," Ayalon said.



NABLUS FUNERAL OF MAHMOUD JEMAYEL: Palestinians carry the white-shrouded body of 26-year-old Mahmoud Jemayel, his face and hands showing, during a funeral ceremony Thursday in Nablus. Jemayel, who was tortured to death by PLO security forces earlier this week, was once sought by Israel as an activist in Yasser Arafat's Fateh movement. He was detained in Palestinian self-rule Nablus in December when PLO security forces trying to restore law and order, rounded up members of a renegade Fateh brigade (See page 1 story) (Reuters photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel believes soldiers buried in Syria

TEL AVIV (R) — Three Israeli soldiers missing since the Jewish state's 1982 invasion of Lebanon are believed to be buried in Syria, Israeli security sources said on Thursday. Yehuda Katz, Zvika Feldman and Zachary Baumel, members of a tank crew that went missing in a battle with Syrian and Palestinian forces near the Bekaa Valley town of Sultan Yaacoub, were previously believed to have been killed and buried somewhere in Lebanon. "All the information available to Israel indicates that the three are buried in Syria," one Israeli security source said. He did not elaborate. Israel Radio quoted a senior Palestinian security source as saying PLO security services had passed information to Israel about a year ago that the three soldiers were buried in a Palestinian cemetery in Syria without Syrian knowledge.

U.N. human rights official in Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — U.N. envoy Gaspar Biro returned to Sudan on Thursday for talks with officials after a two-year ban for his harsh criticism of the country's human rights record, a government newspaper reported. Al Ingaz Al Watani said on Friday that Mr. Biro would spend several days in Sudan. Sudan agreed in April to allow Mr. Biro back in the country after a two-year ban for his harsh reports on human rights abuses in the country in 1993. A senior Sudanese official said at the time that Mr. Biro had apologised for his reports, one of which Sudan said had insulted Islam. Mr. Biro had reported grave human rights abuses including many summary executions, disappearances and systematic torture in Sudan. Sudan said his report was based on false information and declared him persona non grata, though he later visited the southern towns of Juba and Malakal where rebel forces have been fighting a 13-year war against government forces.

Iran buys 12 Tupolev planes from Russia

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian airline company has purchased 12 Tupolev-100 passenger planes from Russia, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported Friday. The deal was signed in Moscow on Thursday between the presidents of Tupolev and Iran's Mahan Air, it said without providing the purchase price or other details. Iran will start taking delivery of the planes in two months. Tupolev has also commited to train Iranian pilots and to set up a center in Iran to provide services. Iran said in January it was negotiating to buy 12 Tupolev-154 planes and made no mention of Tupolev-100s. It said it was also in "final stages" of negotiations with Moscow to set up an assembly line for the manufacture of new Ilyushin-114 transport planes in the central city of Esfahan.

Palestinian convicted of aiding kidnappers

LOD, Israel (AP) — An Israeli military court on Friday convicted an Islamic militant in the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier whose capture and death had led to a weeklong showdown between Israel and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority. The defendant, Jihad Yaghmour, 29, had bought the skullcaps and black hats used by the kidnappers to disguise themselves as observant Jews and lure the hitchhiking soldier, Nachshon Waxman, into their car. The car was driven by Yahgmour, the court said. Yaghmour also rented the video camera with which the kidnappers taped Waxman's plea for help broadcast around the world, and he obtained the safehouse in a West Bank village where Waxman was killed in an Oct. 14, 1994 rescue raid by Israeli commandos. The kidnappers, members of the Islamic militant group Hamas, had demanded the release of the group's spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, from an Israeli jail in exchange for letting Waxman go.

11 drown in Nile in southern Sudan

KHARTOUM (AP) — Eleven people drowned in the Blue Nile after a wooden ferry struck a rock and capsised, the daily Al-Ingaz Al Watani reported Thursday. The ferry was carrying 30 passengers between the towns of Dagoon and Damazeen, 450 kilometres southeast of Khartoum. The rest of the passengers apparently made it to safety. The accident occurred Tuesday as the Nile's level was rising due to seasonal rains on the Ethiopian plateau, where it originates. The Nile River's two branches, the Blue and the White, converge at the capital Khartoum.

Iraq warns Iran against further incursions

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq warned Tehran on Thursday against any further Iranian incursions into its northern territory, saying it had the right to take measures to defend its sovereignty.

In a message addressed to U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, and issued by official Iraqi news agency INA, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohamed Said Al Sahaf condemned Iran's incursion last week into northern Iraq.

"The Iranian aggression is against the integrity and sovereignty of Iraq and constitutes a flagrant violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 598 on the ceasefire between the two countries" in 1988, Mr. Sahaf said.

He added that "Iraq had a legitimate right to take all measures necessary to defend its integrity and its sovereignty. We warn the Iranian government against any further aggression of this type."

Some 2,000 Iranian troops crossed into northern Iraq last week to attack an Iranian Kurdish rebel camp at Koi Sanjaq, 50 kilometres from the Iran-Iraq border, sources in the area said.

Abdallah Hassan Zada, general secretary of the Iraqi-based Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK), said on Wednesday that Iranian troops had completed their withdrawal.

Iran said it attacked the Kurdish rebels to prevent further cross-border attacks into its territory.

Iraqi flag-bearer who defected to U.S. fears certain death if sent home

ATLANTA (R) — Iraqi weightlifter Raed Ahmed, who defected after carrying his country's flag at the Olympic opening ceremony, said on Thursday he would face certain death if the United States refused him political asylum.

Ahmed, 29, said his flight from the Olympic village on Wednesday was "a political statement against the political oppression that the Iraqi people face in Iraq, specifically by (President) Saddam (Hussein)."

"If I am refused by the United States and sent back to Iraq, I will be executed immediately," Ahmed said at a news conference.

Ahmed met officials from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) on Thursday and said he hoped to receive an answer to his asylum request soon.

His lawyer, who asked not to be identified, said the athlete's Olympic status allowed him to remain in the United States legally until September, and that the INS had assured him they would handle the application "expeditiously".

"We remain very concerned for his security," the lawyer said.

Immigration officials would not confirm specific requests for asylum, but said they had anticipated defections might occur during the Olympics. Several Cuban athletes have defected in the past two months.

"We had a small plan for this, so things will move along more quickly than normal," an INS spokesperson said.

Iraq's Olympic delegation chief, Annar Salim, said he had not been told of any change in Ahmed's status and wanted to get in touch with the weightlifter to confirm his intentions.

"I would like very much to talk to him," Salim said. "I have a message for him from his family."

Ahmed's picture was beamed around the world during the Olympic opening ceremony on July 19 when he was given the honour of carrying Iraq's flag and leading the small team during the parade of athletes at start of the games.

On Thursday, however, he said that his thoughts during the ceremony were focused on escape.

"I was thinking, and this is what many Iraqis think, that we'd like to see our flag representing our people. Unfortunately, what has happened is that this flag has been lifted for the name of Saddam, not for the name of the Iraqi people."

With the help of the local representative of the Iraqi National Congress, an overseas-based opposition group, he left the athletes' village for refuge in a suburban safe house.

Ahmed said his wife had been taken to a "safe area" in the Kurdish region in north Iraq, where Saddam's forces are barred by international sanctions. But he said the rest of his family was vulnerable to acts of revenge by the Iraqi government.

"I am very much worried about them, specifically my brothers," Ahmed said, adding that he expected them to be subjected to "all kinds of torture."

Ahmed said his defection was sparked by Saddam's crushing of an uprising in his home city of Basra after the Gulf war. He said he witnessed atrocities, including "mass murder," and that life was still hard for the majority of Iraqis.

"The situation now in Iraq is terrible, there is starvation," he said. "People are weak, people can't do much. People in Iraq are waiting for this regime to end and the sanctions to be lifted."

Ahmed said he hoped to continue in weightlifting if he is allowed to stay in the United States, and indicated he was disappointed with his 23rd place finish in his weight class last Sunday.

"I trained not only to defect," Ahmed said. "I was longing and wishing to get a medal."

Muslim man 'shot dead' near Serb town

CELIC, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP) — A group of armed men shot and killed a 67-year-old Bosnian Muslim outside a Serb-held town in northeast Bosnia, a witness said here Friday.

Alija Agic, a peasant farmer from the Muslim-held northern Bosnian town of Celic, was cutting grass in a field near the Serb-held town of Koraj, at around 2:00 p.m. (1200 GMT) Thursday when he was attacked by four or five men in a car, witness Hadzihalil Salihovic told AFP. Salihovic said Bosnian Serbs appeared to be to blame.

In Sarajevo, U.N. police asked for additional patrols from the NATO-led peace implementation force (IFOR) in the region after the reported attack.

"The IPTF (international police task force) has requested additional patrols from IFOR," U.N. spokesman Patrick Svenson told AFP. "The situation is very tense between Koraj and Celic."

Svenson was not able to confirm details of the shooting incident, but said it was "very likely" that a person had been killed going from second-hand reports he had received.

The incident, if confirmed, would be the first such lethal attack in several months in Bosnia.

It follows an incident in May when three men were shot dead apparently by Serbs near the village of Lukavica, outside the Serb-held town of Doboj.

Salihovic, who said he was with Agic at the time of the shooting, said the field where they were attacked lay a few hundred metres on the Serb side of the inter-entity boundary line, that separates Serb-held and Muslim-Croat federation territory.

Bosnia's former warring parties agreed a peace treaty in November last year, and are currently preparing for elections in September.

Salihovic said the two men had gone to the field from the nearby Muslim town of Celic earlier Thursday to cut grass for their cattle. A vehicle of the IFOR was nearby, he said.

As they were cutting the grass, a car appeared from the direction of Koraj and four or five armed men got out and fired one burst of gunfire before driving off back into Koraj, Salihovic said.

Agic was hit, by one or two bullets and died from his wounds later Thursday, Salihovic said.

Visibly upset, Salihovic was speaking alongside the dead man's mourning family — his wife, daughter and sister — gathered with friends in their family home.

Muslims from Celic, many of them refugees from Koraj, have repeatedly called on Serb authorities in Koraj to allow them to return for visits to family graves, and eventually to live.

International officials describe the Serb authorities in Koraj as hardline nationalist supporters of Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic, their former leader. They have always refused to allow such visits. A U.N. police official in Celic investigating the reported shooting, declined to comment on the incident but said an investigation would start Saturday, involving U.N. and local police.

Netanyahu disappointed with results of G-7 meeting on terrorism

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu said the Group of Seven industrialised nations made a mistake when it failed to impose sanctions against some of Israel's worst enemies during an anti-terrorism summit in Paris this week.

In an interview published Friday in the Israeli newspaper Maariv, Mr. Netanyahu said an American proposal at the conference to sanction Libya, Iraq, Iran and Sudan for sponsoring terrorism should have been accepted.

"It is impossible to fend off the waves of terror and solve the problems without placing pressure on the countries behind the various terrorist organisations," Mr. Netanyahu told Maariv.

The foreign ministers of the G-7 only agreed to increase international cooperation in the fight against terror.

"I was disappointed that tougher measures were not taken. I hope that the seven industrialised nations' policies change in the future," Mr. Netanyahu said.

Mr. Netanyahu also spoke of tough measures his new hardline government would take against Palestinian militants. He said Israel would keep open the option of sending troops into Palestinian-controlled areas if terror attacks resumed.

"We would exact a very high price," Mr. Netanyahu said.

"We will give our forces freedom to act against terrorist elements in those areas," he said. "We will enter any place which seems necessary to protect citizens of Israel," Mr. Netanyahu added.

Palestinians have said sending Israeli troops into PLO-ruled areas would violate the peace agreements. Israel's previous government refrained from doing so even during its spring crackdown on Islamic militants sparked by four suicide bombings.

Mr. Netanyahu staunchly opposed the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy accords, saying they endangered Israeli security. However, he has said he would honour the accords, with a greater emphasis on security.

The prime minister has said Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat wasn't doing enough to rein in Islamic militants responsible for the suicide bombings in February and March that killed 63 people.

COLUMN

Man takes vacation with pet — a crocodile

LOS ANGELES (R) — A Japanese man was in trouble for what he said was a vacation with his pet, an endangered species of crocodile. Toru Hattori, 39, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to smuggling the Siamese crocodile into the United States, saying "I couldn't leave it at home. It's not like a dog." But Assistant U.S. Attorney Patricia Beaman said: "It is not reasonable that one would treat a pet, especially one on the verge of extinction, the way he did. He checked it (into the cargo hold of the plane). It was exposed to extreme degrees of hot and cold and it died about a week after it got here."

Denver man's sneeze could have been fatal

DENVER (R) — Whoever thought blowing your nose could be fatal? It could have been for Nicolas Villarruel, 29, after a ma-chine blew up at the plant where he worked and lodged a dangerous explosive charge in his nose. The machine loads a charge equal to five big firecrackers into a device that activates car air bags. The device, called an initiator, stuck in the man's nose when the machine exploded. He was escorted to a local hospital by the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office bomb squad and was operated on partly under water because the initiator is activated by air.

Hundreds gather to watch pigs fly in N. Ireland

DUBLIN (R) — The Northern Ireland village of Augher came to a virtual standstill as hundreds of local people gathered to watch "Lester Piggott" romp home in a steeplechase race for pigs. Twenty racing pigs cleared 12-inch (30-cm) high fences in a 100-metre dash over a specially constructed track at the Clogher Valley Agricultural Show, spurred on by the theme music from the film Rocky. Farmer Walter Shortt, who organised the event to raise money for cancer research, said it had been a great success.

Peru's president has novel recipe for inflation

LIMA (R) — Peru's President Alberto Fujimori has come up with a new recipe to combat inflation: Eat less chicken. Mr. Fujimori, lauded worldwide for his bold economic strategies, told a group of Peruvian highlanders his policy was based on the simple formula of supply and demand. "We've got to stop eating so much chicken," he said. "That way the chicken-sellers will have to bring their prices down." The president devised his solution after catapulting chicken prices were held responsible for worrying inflation.

Dutch military goes for new clean-cut image

THE HAGUE (R) — The Dutch military has signalled the end of an era, sending home two servicemen from a NATO air base in Italy because their hair was too long. The 1970s image of long locks topped with a beret is out and the military is set to outlaw ear-rings and crack down on drug abuse in the new professional army as conscription is ended. In a memo widely quoted in the Dutch media, a senior military commander said: "Our product is good, but sometimes the packaging lets us down."